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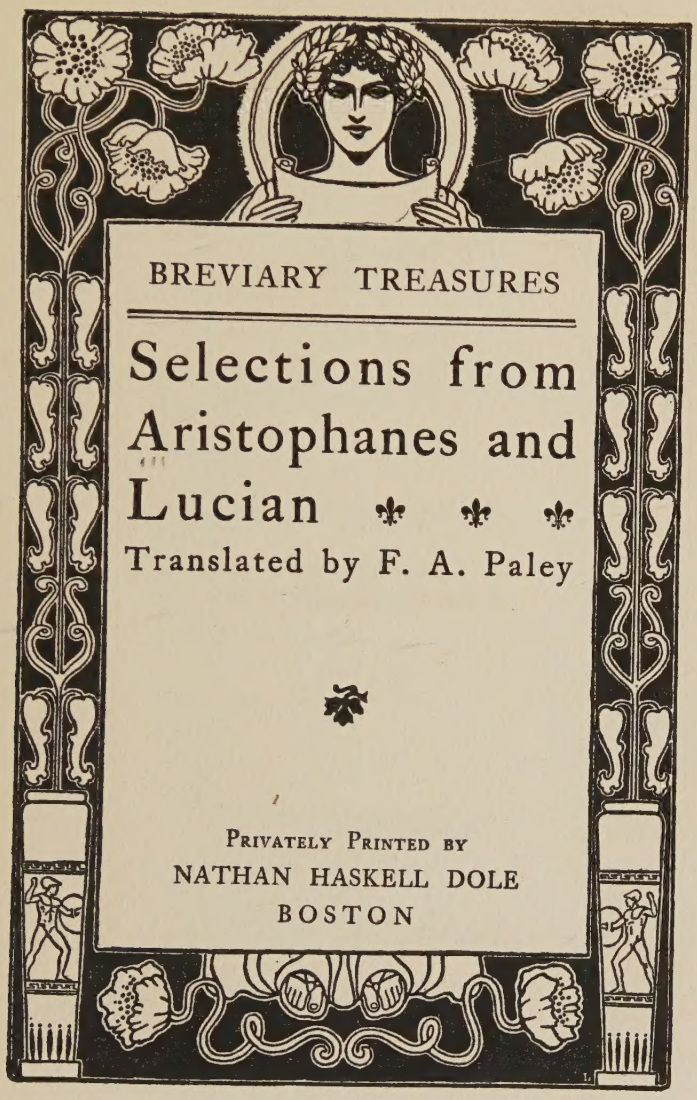
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SELECTIONS FROM ARISTOPHANES AND LUCIAN


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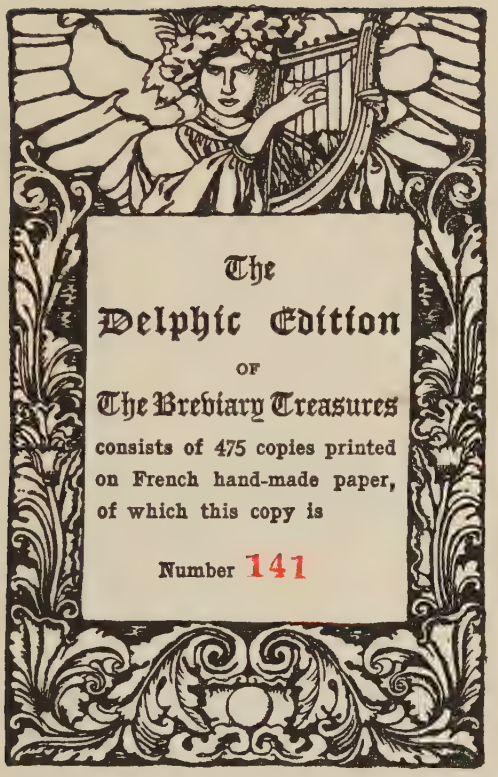
Selections from Aristophanes and Lucian

Translated by F. A. Paley

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INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to Homer, the Immortal Gods had occasional opportunity for indulging in merriment. The serious side of human life or their own affairs did not entirely occupy them. It might be imagined that they regarded men and women as enacting tragedies and comedies for their delectation. Perhaps the tragedy preponderates; it certainly does for the actors. Even those of us who recognize that we are performing comedies and farces, and who, by the very fact that we are selected for such parts, must see the fun of it, else we should act them as dully as "Bottom the Weaver" and the other clowns in "Pyramus and Thisbe" — even we, I say, use our fortunate sense of humour as a palliative to the pathos of our real existence. Blessed indeed is the sense of humour. It is a balm, a cordial. Great men who lack it are vastly less great because they lack it.

Certain nations characteristically lean

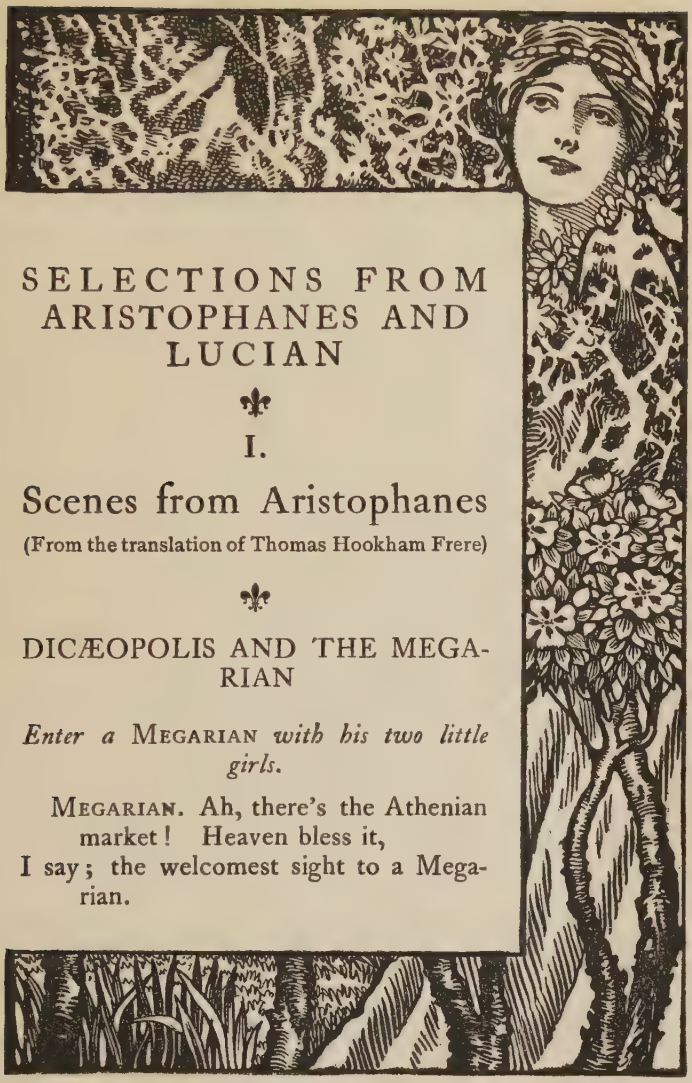
to the serious or the comic. One searches with great expenditure of labour for humourous or witty literature delivered to us by the Romans. What there is will probably send a tap-root into Greek soil. Plautus and Terence were at most adapters if not translators. The Coliseum and the rule of the *pollice verso* were not keyed to Comedy. No doubt in the cultivated and brilliant society which Mæcenas and Augustus gathered around them there was display of wit. Horace was gifted with it. Catullus showed sparks of it. But the satirists were too grim and savage to observe the amenities. Not until Martial do we find much scope for citation.

With the Greeks, on the other hand, wit and humour were spontaneous and indigenous. It begins with Homer. Aristophanes is full of quotable passages. There are hundreds of witty sayings that have come down to our day and passed current in every age and still go from hand to hand. The whole field of Greek literature is rich in epigrammatic sentences.

The present volume is devoted almost wholly to brief selected passages from Aristophanes and Lucian. Aristophanes's life covered the last half of the fourth century B. C., and he died in 388. Lucian was born in Syria and lived from 125 until 180 A. D. In their treatment of the Gods they are surprisingly similar. The skeptical insolence of their arraignment is only equalled by the keenness of their satire. Both of them wonderfully combine wit and humour. There is the flash and also the radiance. Consequently, even under the veil of a translation, much of what they wrote is as perennially young and as modern as if written for the men of our day. A few of the best epigrams of Martial, a Spaniard, whose life covered the last half of the first century of our era, are added.

These three authors, thus brought into comparison, show Greek and classic wit and humour to the highest advantage.

N. H. D.



SELECTIONS FROM ARISTOPHANES AND LUCIAN

I.

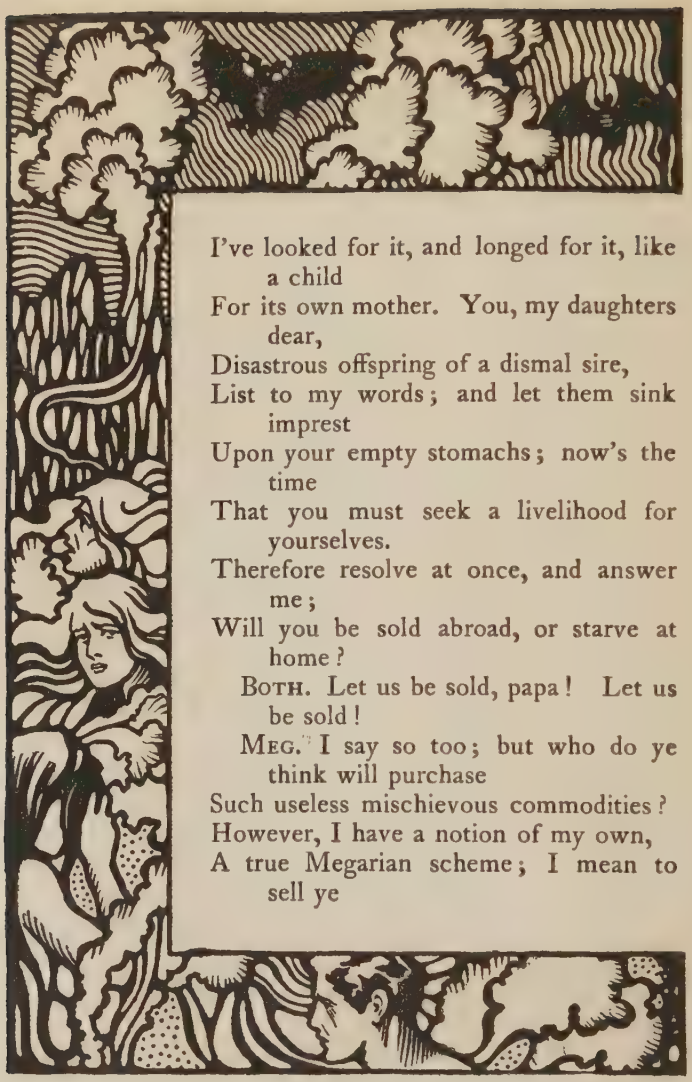
Scenes from Aristophanes

(From the translation of Thomas Hookham Frere)

DICÆOPOLIS AND THE MEGARIAN

Enter a MEGARIAN *with his two little girls.*

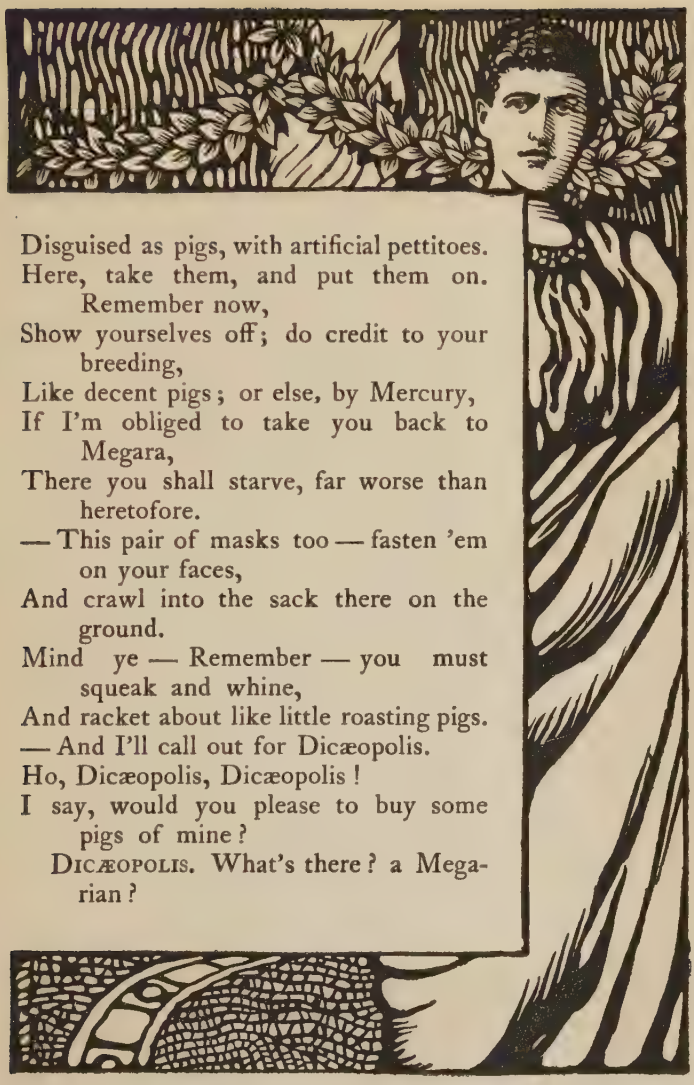
MEGARIAN. Ah, there's the Athenian market! Heaven bless it,
I say; the welcomest sight to a Megarian.



I've looked for it, and longed for it, like a child
For its own mother. You, my daughters dear,
Disastrous offspring of a dismal sire,
List to my words; and let them sink imprest
Upon your empty stomachs; now's the time
That you must seek a livelihood for yourselves.
Therefore resolve at once, and answer me;
Will you be sold abroad, or starve at home?

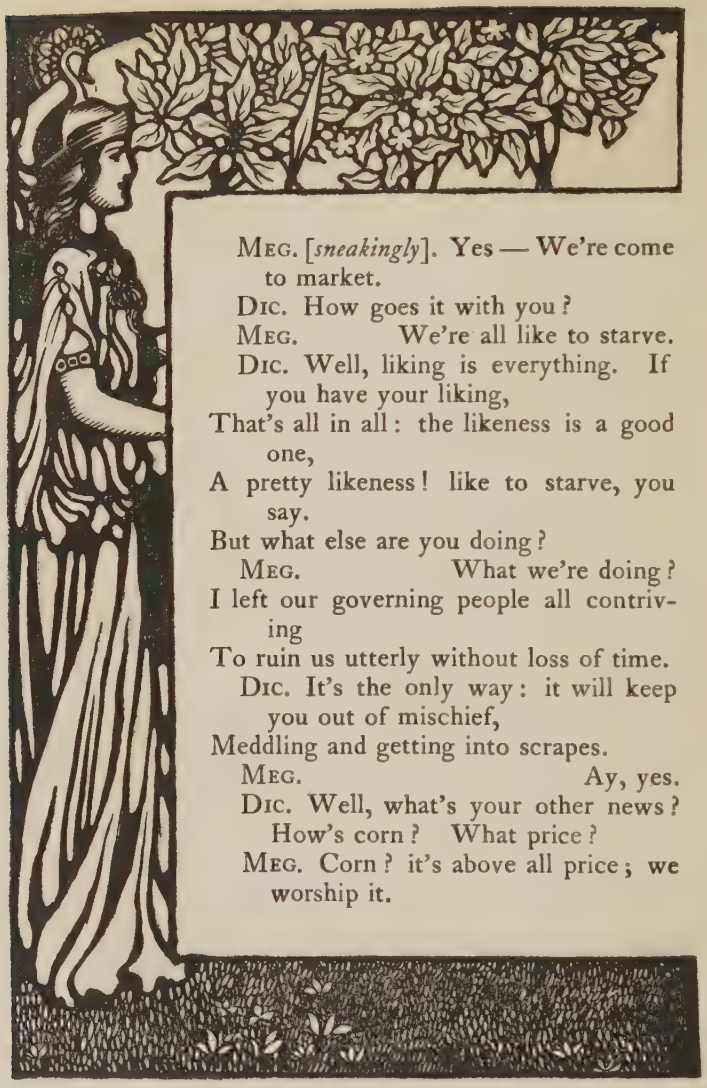
BOTH. Let us be sold, papa! Let us be sold!

MEG. I say so too; but who do ye think will purchase
Such useless mischievous commodities?
However, I have a notion of my own,
A true Megarian scheme; I mean to sell ye

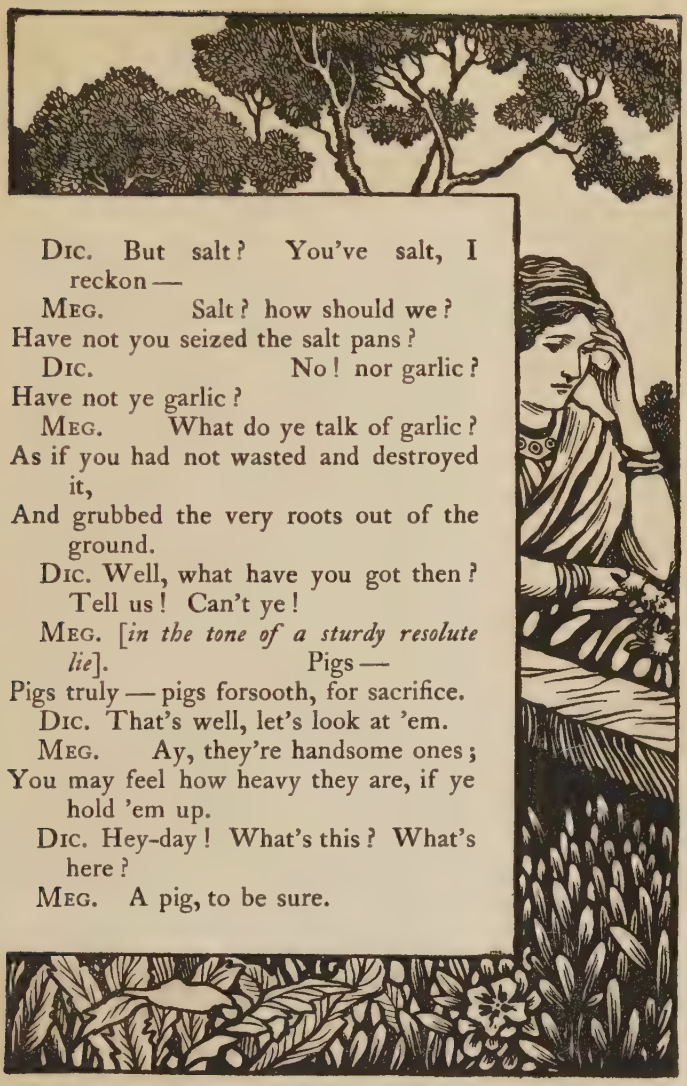


Disguised as pigs, with artificial pettitoes.
Here, take them, and put them on.
Remember now,
Show yourselves off; do credit to your
breeding,
Like decent pigs; or else, by Mercury,
If I'm obliged to take you back to
Megara,
There you shall starve, far worse than
heretofore.
— This pair of masks too — fasten 'em
on your faces,
And crawl into the sack there on the
ground.
Mind ye — Remember — you must
squeak and whine,
And racket about like little roasting pigs.
— And I'll call out for Dicæopolis.
Ho, Dicæopolis, Dicæopolis!
I say, would you please to buy some
pigs of mine?

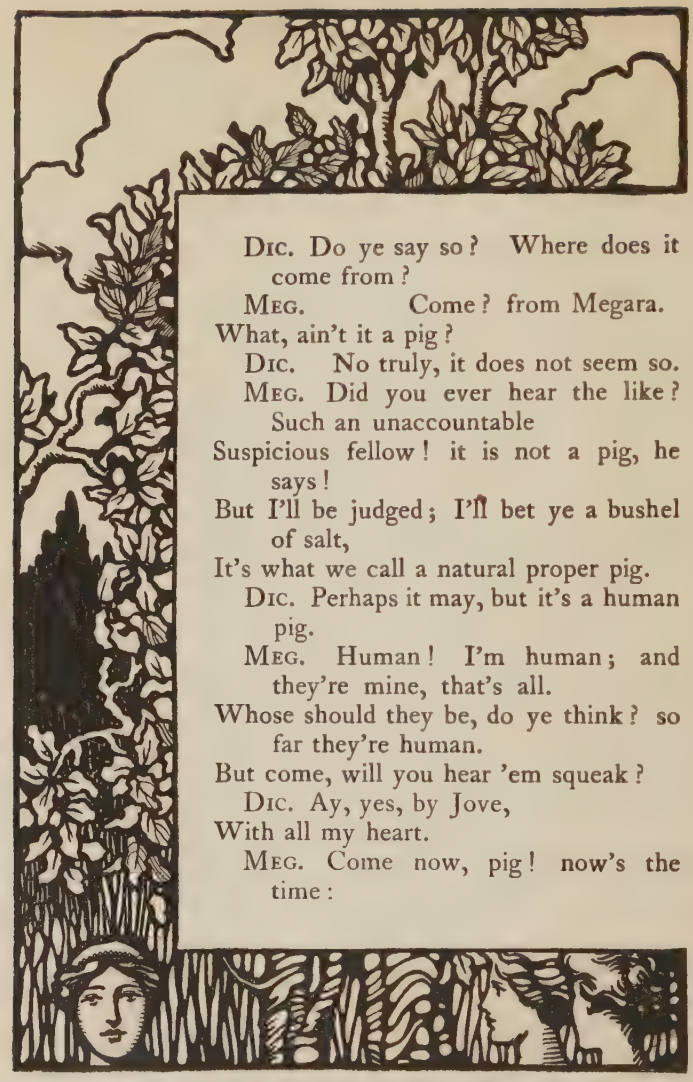
DICÆOPOLIS. What's there? a Mega-
rian?



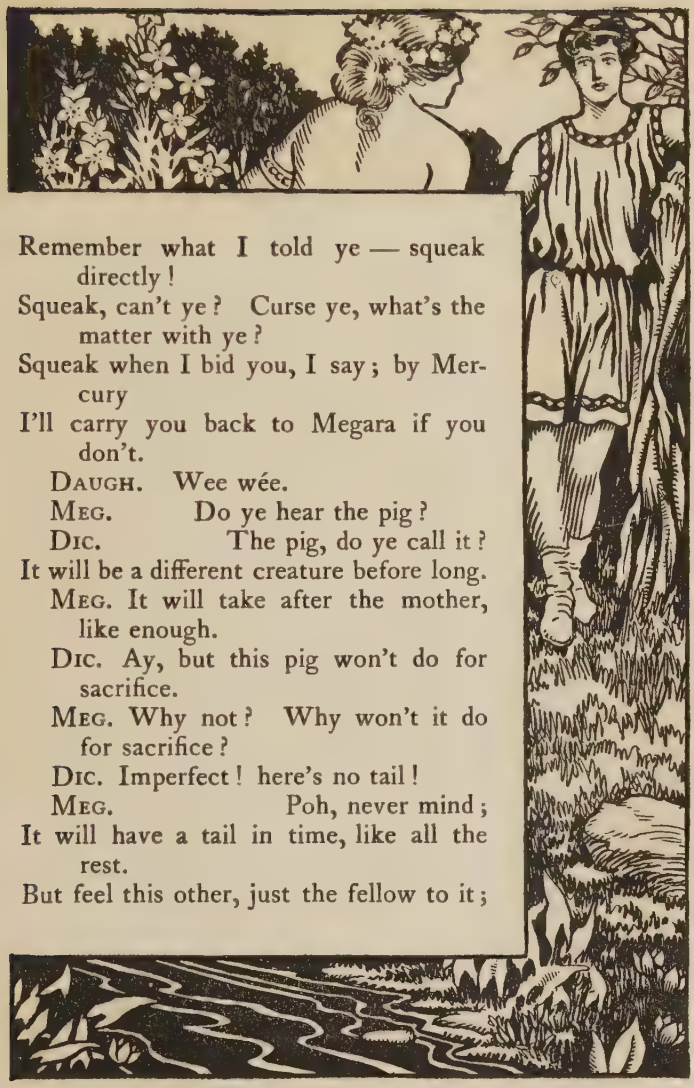
MEG. [*sneakingly*]. Yes — We're come to market.
DIC. How goes it with you?
MEG. We're all like to starve.
DIC. Well, liking is everything. If you have your liking,
That's all in all: the likeness is a good one,
A pretty likeness! like to starve, you say.
But what else are you doing?
MEG. What we're doing?
I left our governing people all contriving
To ruin us utterly without loss of time.
DIC. It's the only way: it will keep you out of mischief,
Meddling and getting into scrapes.
MEG. Ay, yes.
DIC. Well, what's your other news? How's corn? What price?
MEG. Corn? it's above all price; we worship it.



DIC. But salt? You've salt, I reckon —
MEG. Salt? how should we?
Have not you seized the salt pans?
DIC. No! nor garlic?
Have not ye garlic?
MEG. What do ye talk of garlic?
As if you had not wasted and destroyed it,
And grubbed the very roots out of the ground.
DIC. Well, what have you got then? Tell us! Can't ye!
MEG. [*in the tone of a sturdy resolute lie*]. Pigs —
Pigs truly — pigs forsooth, for sacrifice.
DIC. That's well, let's look at 'em.
MEG. Ay, they're handsome ones;
You may feel how heavy they are, if ye hold 'em up.
DIC. Hey-day! What's this? What's here?
MEG. A pig, to be sure.



DIC. Do ye say so? Where does it come from?
MEG. Come? from Megara. What, ain't it a pig?
DIC. No truly, it does not seem so.
MEG. Did you ever hear the like? Such an unaccountable
Suspicious fellow! it is not a pig, he says!
But I'll be judged; I'll bet ye a bushel of salt,
It's what we call a natural proper pig.
DIC. Perhaps it may, but it's a human pig.
MEG. Human! I'm human; and they're mine, that's all.
Whose should they be, do ye think? so far they're human.
But come, will you hear 'em squeak?
DIC. Ay, yes, by Jove,
With all my heart.
MEG. Come now, pig! now's the time:



Remember what I told ye — squeak directly!
Squeak, can't ye? Curse ye, what's the matter with ye?
Squeak when I bid you, I say; by Mercury
I'll carry you back to Megara if you don't.

DAUGH. Wee wée.

MEG. Do ye hear the pig?

DIC. The pig, do ye call it?
It will be a different creature before long.

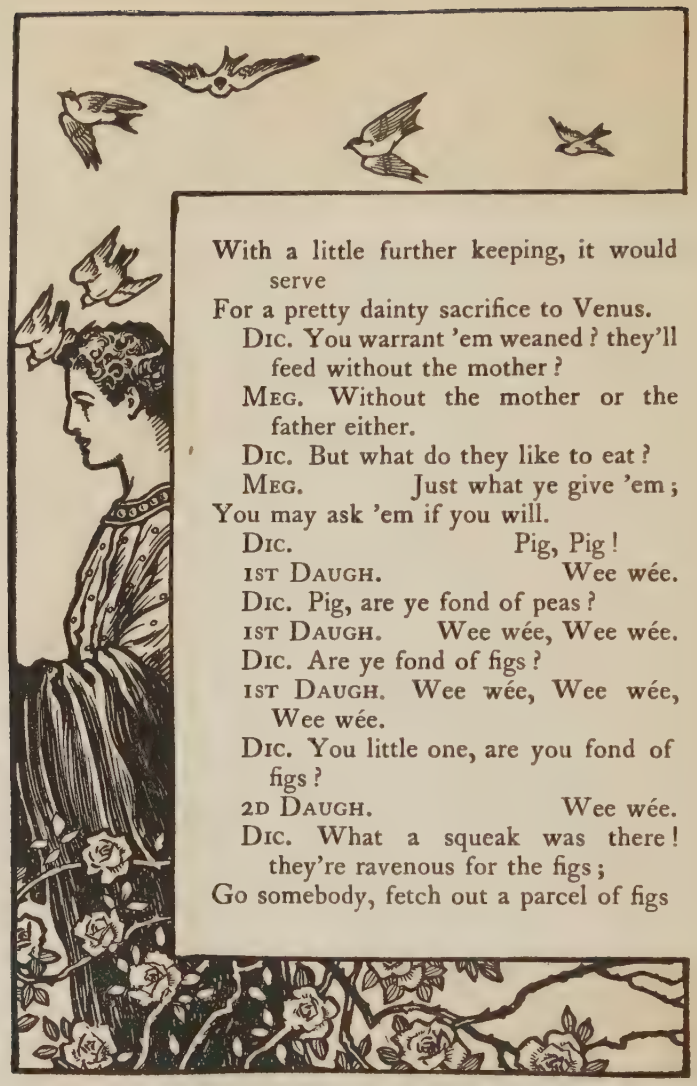
MEG. It will take after the mother, like enough.

DIC. Ay, but this pig won't do for sacrifice.

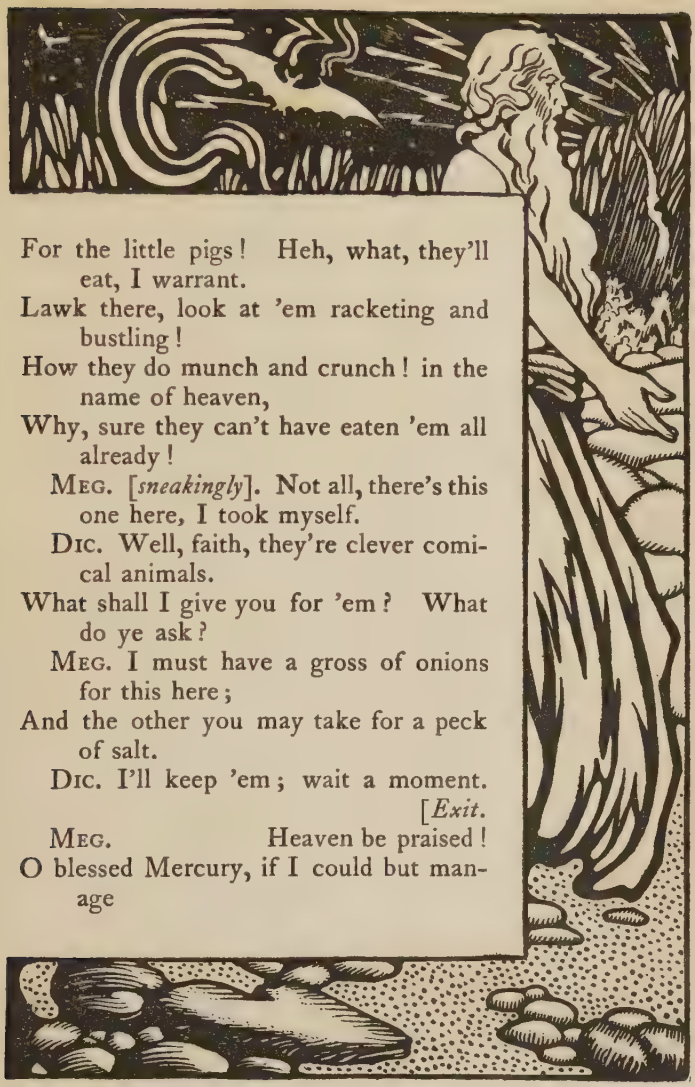
MEG. Why not? Why won't it do for sacrifice?

DIC. Imperfect! here's no tail!

MEG. Poh, never mind;
It will have a tail in time, like all the rest.
But feel this other, just the fellow to it;



With a little further keeping, it would
serve
For a pretty dainty sacrifice to Venus.
DIC. You warrant 'em weaned? they'll
feed without the mother?
MEG. Without the mother or the
father either.
DIC. But what do they like to eat?
MEG. Just what ye give 'em;
You may ask 'em if you will.
DIC. Pig, Pig!
1ST DAUGH. Wee wée.
DIC. Pig, are ye fond of peas?
1ST DAUGH. Wee wée, Wee wée.
DIC. Are ye fond of figs?
1ST DAUGH. Wee wée, Wee wée,
Wee wée.
DIC. You little one, are you fond of
figs?
2D DAUGH. Wee wée.
DIC. What a squeak was there!
they're ravenous for the figs;
Go somebody, fetch out a parcel of figs



For the little pigs! Heh, what, they'll
eat, I warrant.
Lawk there, look at 'em racketing and
bustling!
How they do munch and crunch! in the
name of heaven,
Why, sure they can't have eaten 'em all
already!

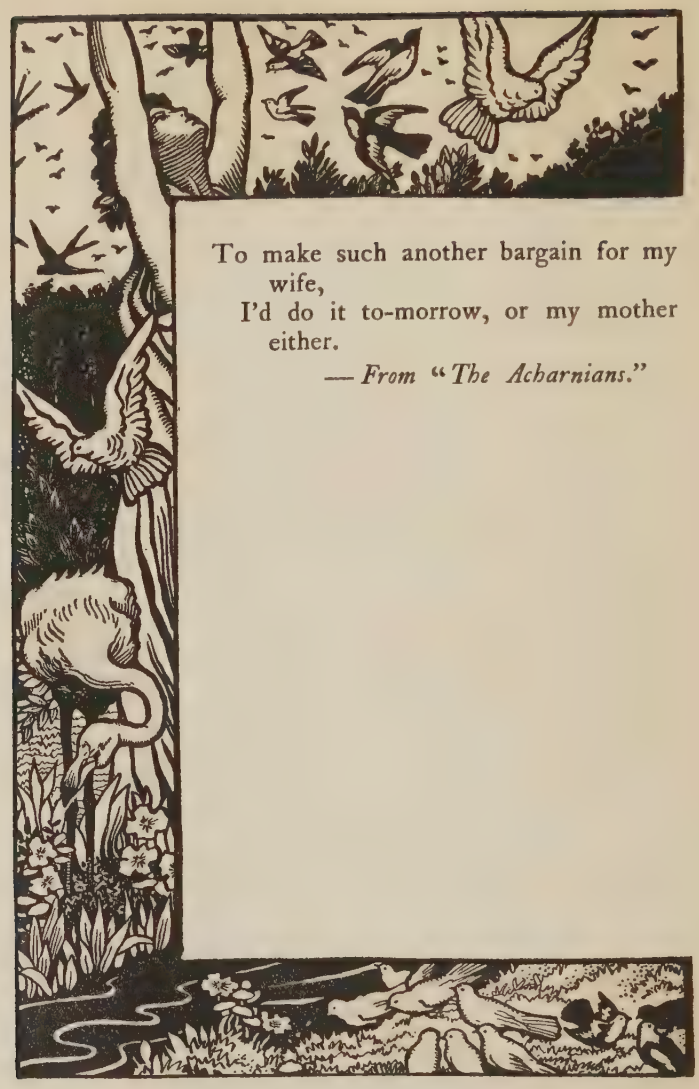
MEG. [*sneakingly*]. Not all, there's this
one here, I took myself.

DIC. Well, faith, they're clever comi-
cal animals.
What shall I give you for 'em? What
do ye ask?

MEG. I must have a gross of onions
for this here;
And the other you may take for a peck
of salt.

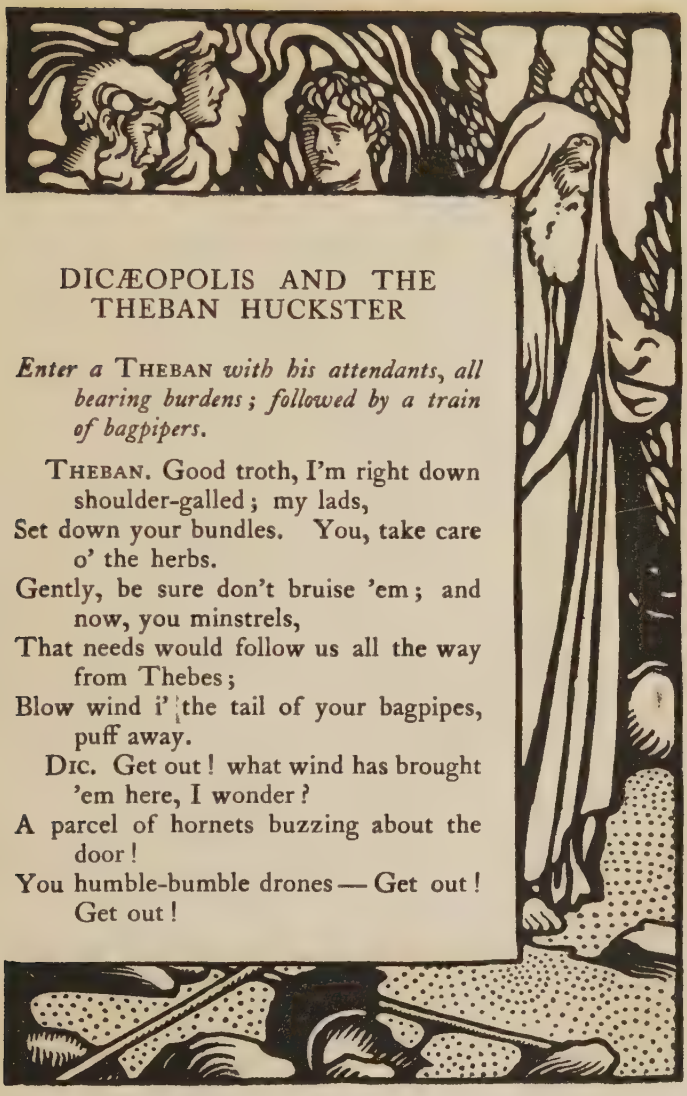
DIC. I'll keep 'em; wait a moment.
[*Exit.*

MEG. Heaven be praised!
O blessed Mercury, if I could but man-
age



To make such another bargain for my
wife,
I'd do it to-morrow, or my mother
either.

— *From* "*The Acharnians.*"

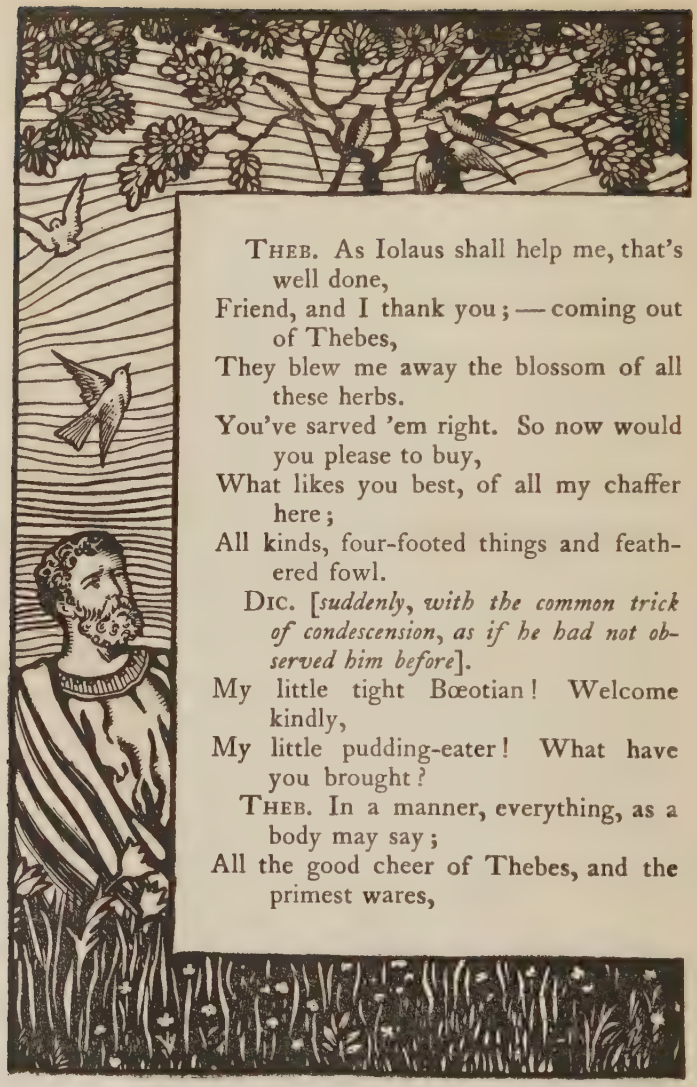


DICÆOPOLIS AND THE THEBAN HUCKSTER

Enter a THEBAN *with his attendants, all bearing burdens; followed by a train of bagpipers.*

THEBAN. Good troth, I'm right down shoulder-galled; my lads,
Set down your bundles. You, take care o' the herbs.
Gently, be sure don't bruise 'em; and now, you minstrels,
That needs would follow us all the way from Thebes;
Blow wind i' the tail of your bagpipes, puff away.

DIC. Get out! what wind has brought 'em here, I wonder?
A parcel of hornets buzzing about the door!
You humble-bumble drones — Get out! Get out!

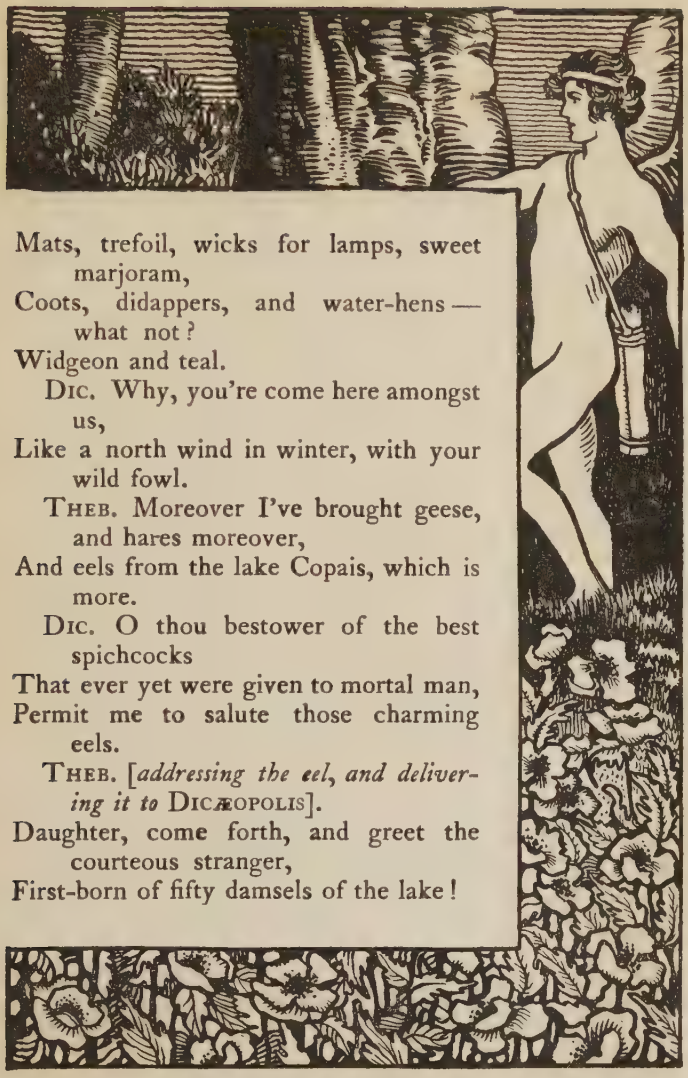


THEB. As Iolaus shall help me, that's
well done,
Friend, and I thank you; — coming out
of Thebes,
They blew me away the blossom of all
these herbs.
You've served 'em right. So now would
you please to buy,
What likes you best, of all my chaffer
here;
All kinds, four-footed things and feath-
ered fowl.

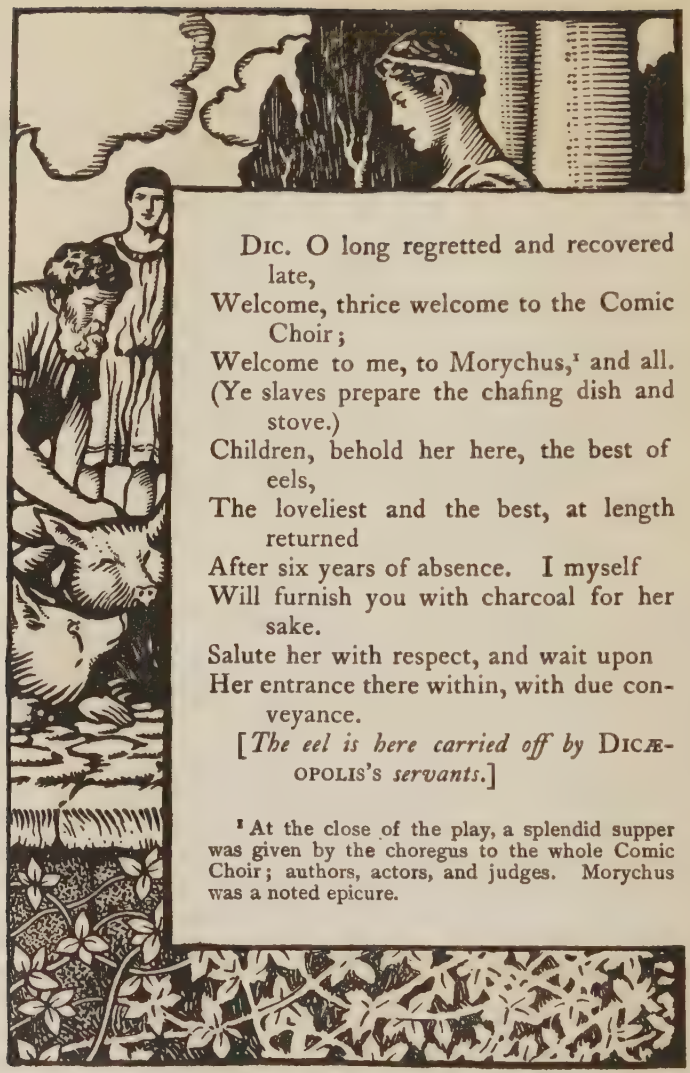
DIC. [*suddenly, with the common trick of condescension, as if he had not observed him before*].

My little tight Bœotian! Welcome
kindly,
My little pudding-eater! What have
you brought?

THEB. In a manner, everything, as a
body may say;
All the good cheer of Thebes, and the
primest wares,



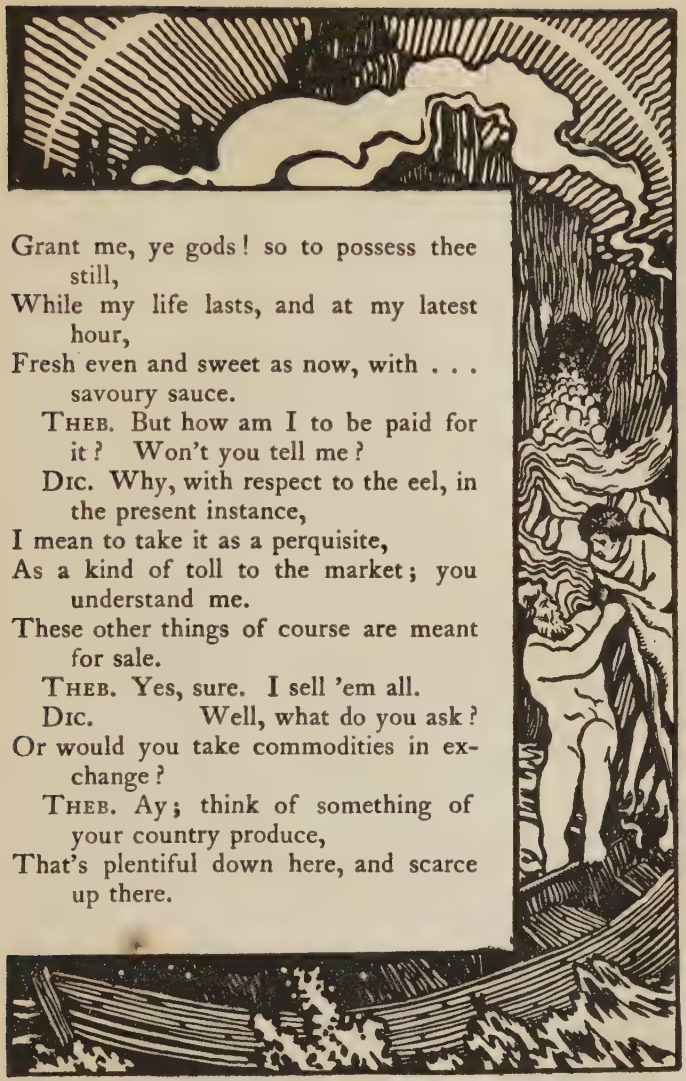
Mats, trefoil, wicks for lamps, sweet marjoram,
Coots, didappers, and water-hens — what not?
Widgeon and teal.
DIC. Why, you're come here amongst us,
Like a north wind in winter, with your wild fowl.
THEB. Moreover I've brought geese, and hares moreover,
And eels from the lake Copais, which is more.
DIC. O thou bestower of the best spichcocks
That ever yet were given to mortal man,
Permit me to salute those charming eels.
THEB. [*addressing the eel, and delivering it to* DICÆOPOLIS].
Daughter, come forth, and greet the courteous stranger,
First-born of fifty damsels of the lake!



Dic. O long regretted and recovered late,
Welcome, thrice welcome to the Comic Choir;
Welcome to me, to Morychus,[1] and all.
(Ye slaves prepare the chafing dish and stove.)
Children, behold her here, the best of eels,
The loveliest and the best, at length returned
After six years of absence. I myself
Will furnish you with charcoal for her sake.
Salute her with respect, and wait upon
Her entrance there within, with due conveyance.

[*The eel is here carried off by* Dicæopolis's *servants.*]

[1] At the close of the play, a splendid supper was given by the choregus to the whole Comic Choir; authors, actors, and judges. Morychus was a noted epicure.



Grant me, ye gods! so to possess thee still,
While my life lasts, and at my latest hour,
Fresh even and sweet as now, with . . . savoury sauce.

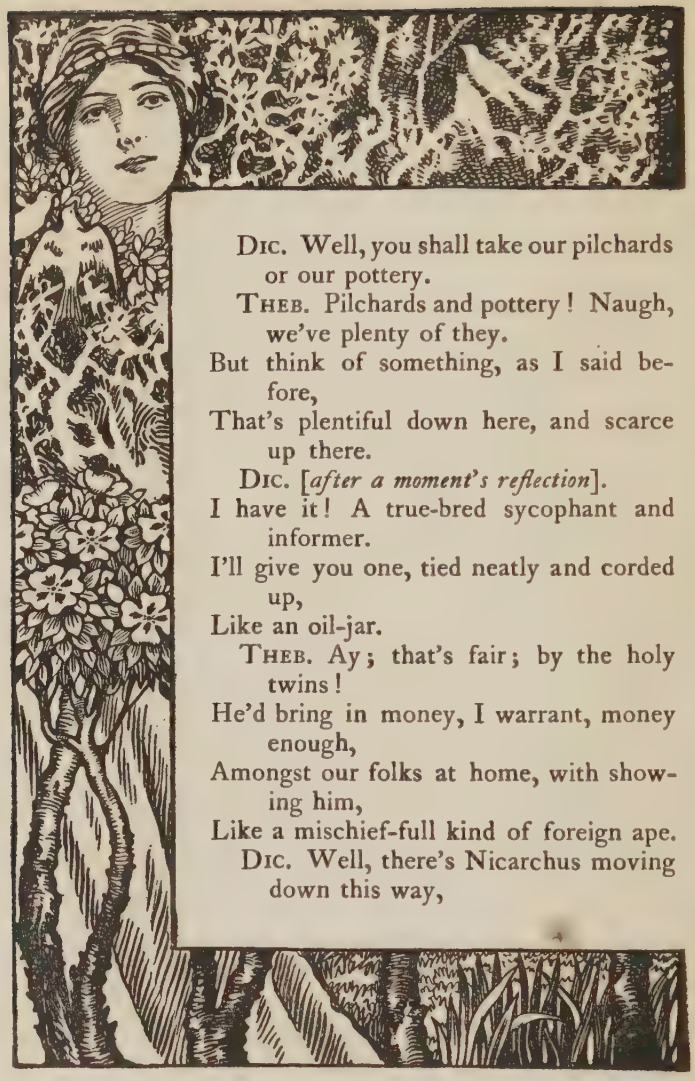
THEB. But how am I to be paid for it? Won't you tell me?

DIC. Why, with respect to the eel, in the present instance,
I mean to take it as a perquisite,
As a kind of toll to the market; you understand me.
These other things of course are meant for sale.

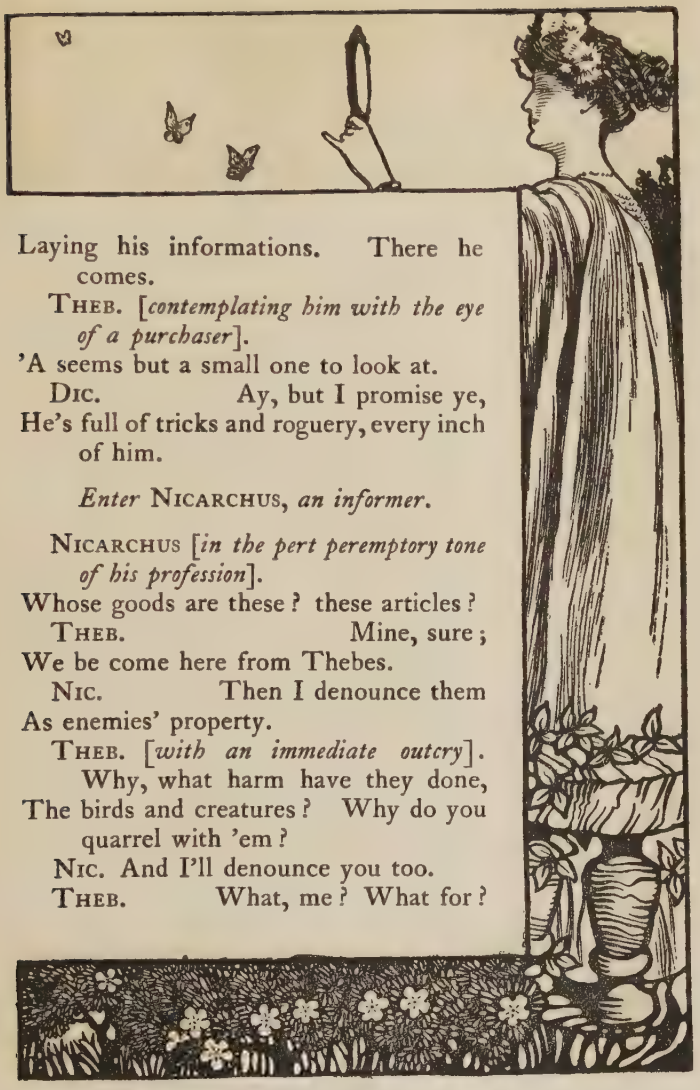
THEB. Yes, sure. I sell 'em all.

DIC. Well, what do you ask?
Or would you take commodities in exchange?

THEB. Ay; think of something of your country produce,
That's plentiful down here, and scarce up there.



DIC. Well, you shall take our pilchards
or our pottery.
THEB. Pilchards and pottery! Naugh,
we've plenty of they.
But think of something, as I said be-
fore,
That's plentiful down here, and scarce
up there.
DIC. [*after a moment's reflection*].
I have it! A true-bred sycophant and
informer.
I'll give you one, tied neatly and corded
up,
Like an oil-jar.
THEB. Ay; that's fair; by the holy
twins!
He'd bring in money, I warrant, money
enough,
Amongst our folks at home, with show-
ing him,
Like a mischief-full kind of foreign ape.
DIC. Well, there's Nicarchus moving
down this way,



Laying his informations. There he comes.

THEB. [*contemplating him with the eye of a purchaser*].

'A seems but a small one to look at.

DIC. Ay, but I promise ye,
He's full of tricks and roguery, every inch of him.

Enter NICARCHUS, *an informer.*

NICARCHUS [*in the pert peremptory tone of his profession*].

Whose goods are these? these articles?

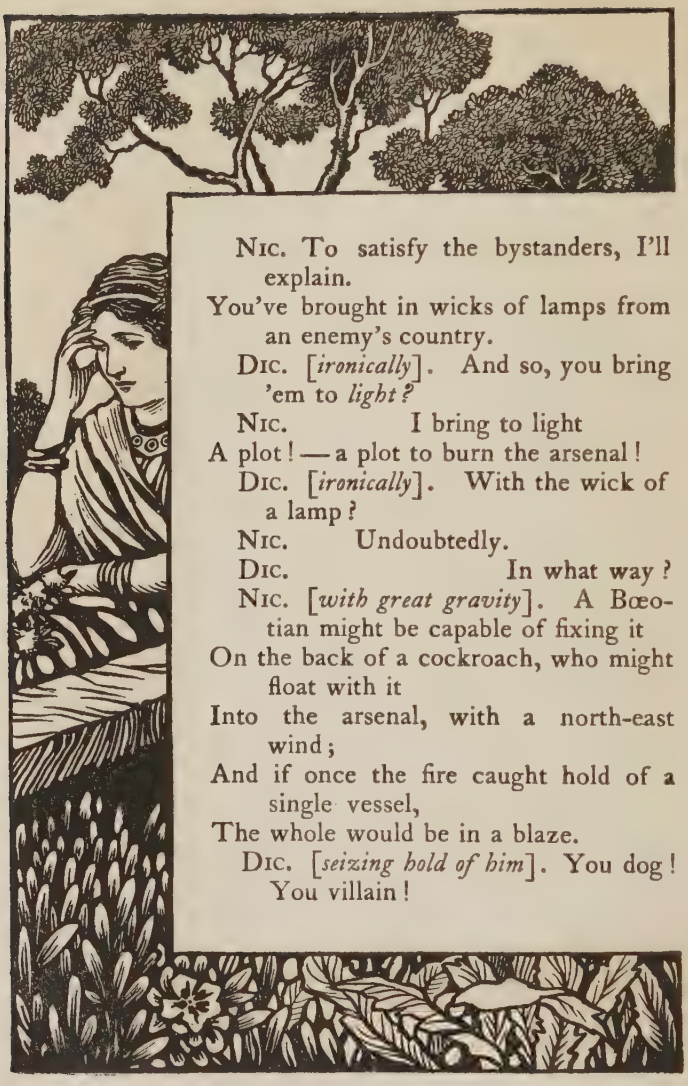
THEB. Mine, sure;
We be come here from Thebes.

NIC. Then I denounce them
As enemies' property.

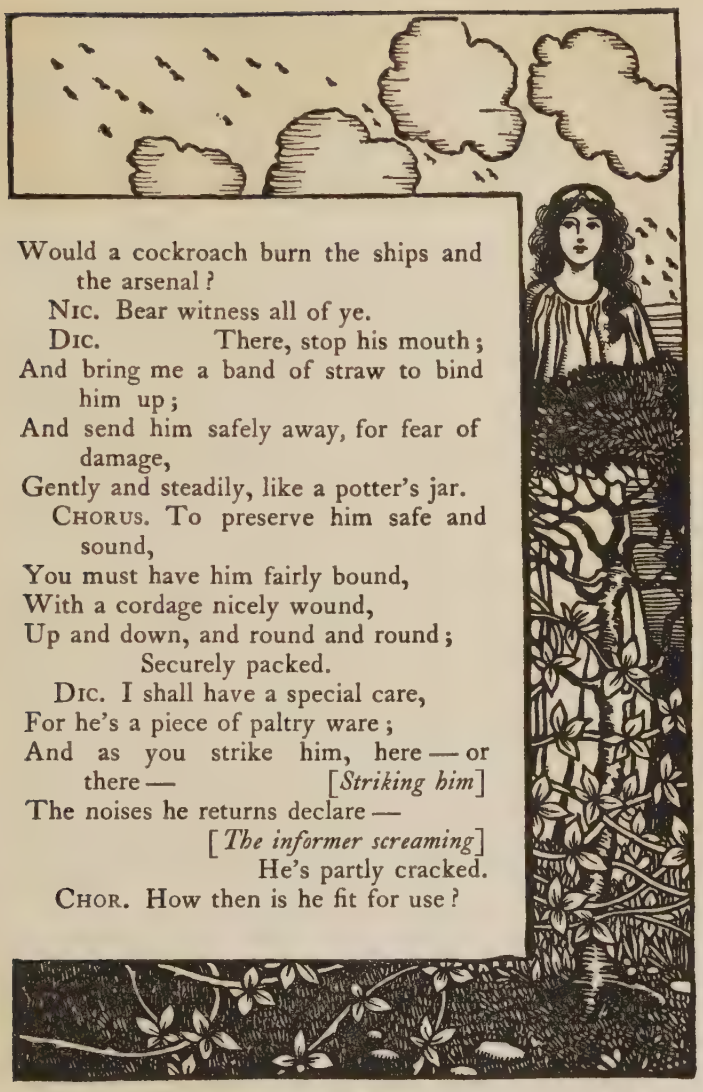
THEB. [*with an immediate outcry*]. Why, what harm have they done,
The birds and creatures? Why do you quarrel with 'em?

NIC. And I'll denounce you too.

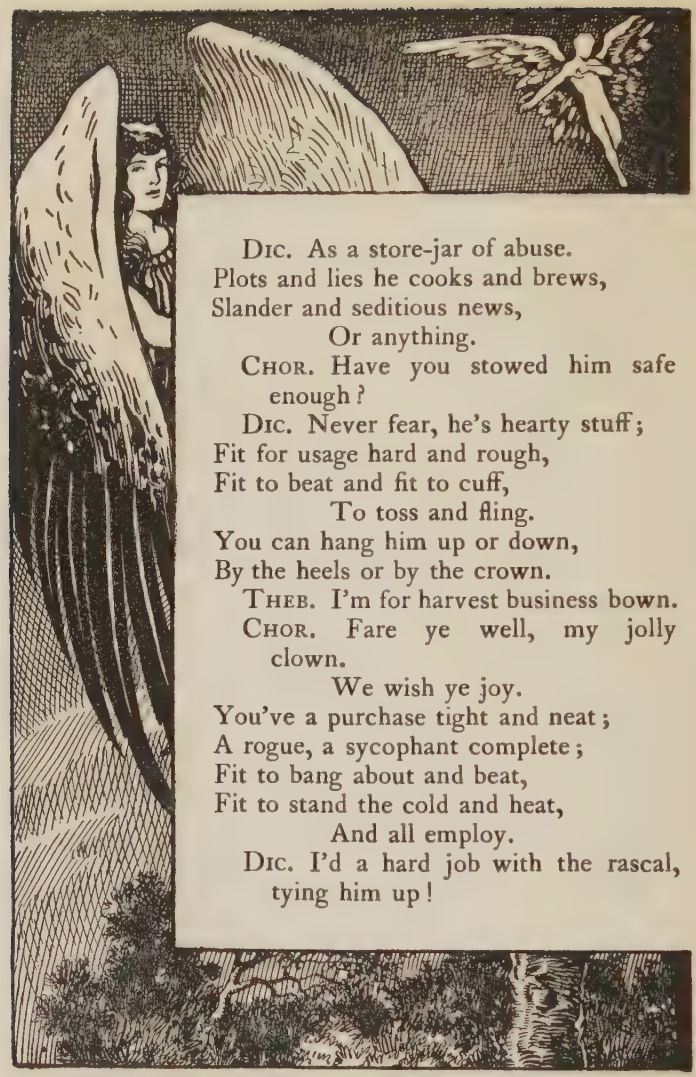
THEB. What, me? What for?



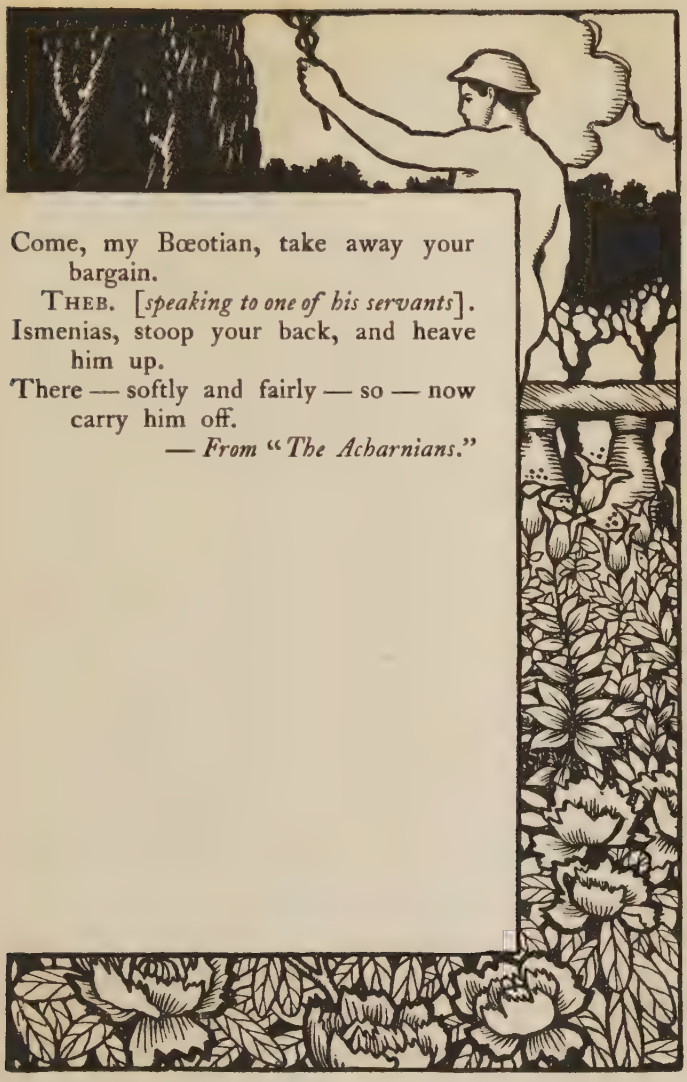
Nic. To satisfy the bystanders, I'll explain.
You've brought in wicks of lamps from an enemy's country.
Dic. [*ironically*]. And so, you bring 'em to *light?*
Nic. I bring to light
A plot! — a plot to burn the arsenal!
Dic. [*ironically*]. With the wick of a lamp?
Nic. Undoubtedly.
Dic. In what way?
Nic. [*with great gravity*]. A Bœotian might be capable of fixing it
On the back of a cockroach, who might float with it
Into the arsenal, with a north-east wind;
And if once the fire caught hold of a single vessel,
The whole would be in a blaze.
Dic. [*seizing hold of him*]. You dog! You villain!



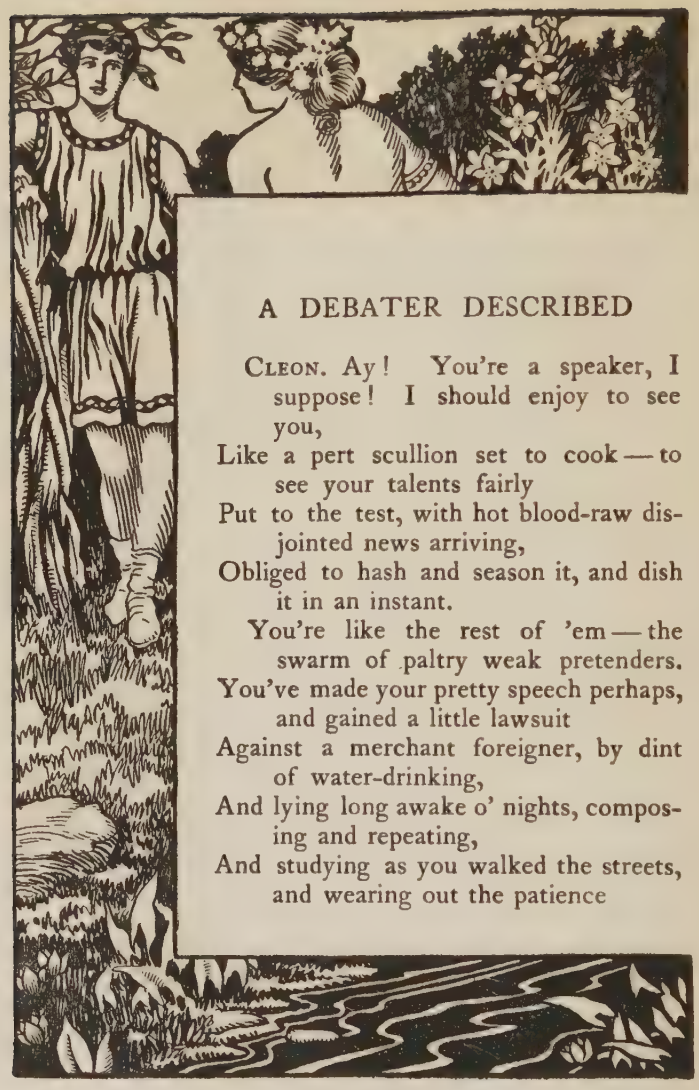
Would a cockroach burn the ships and
the arsenal?
NIC. Bear witness all of ye.
DIC. There, stop his mouth;
And bring me a band of straw to bind
him up;
And send him safely away, for fear of
damage,
Gently and steadily, like a potter's jar.
CHORUS. To preserve him safe and
sound,
You must have him fairly bound,
With a cordage nicely wound,
Up and down, and round and round;
Securely packed.
DIC. I shall have a special care,
For he's a piece of paltry ware;
And as you strike him, here — or
there — [*Striking him*]
The noises he returns declare —
[*The informer screaming*]
He's partly cracked.
CHOR. How then is he fit for use?



DIC. As a store-jar of abuse.
Plots and lies he cooks and brews,
Slander and seditious news,
Or anything.
CHOR. Have you stowed him safe enough?
DIC. Never fear, he's hearty stuff;
Fit for usage hard and rough,
Fit to beat and fit to cuff,
To toss and fling.
You can hang him up or down,
By the heels or by the crown.
THEB. I'm for harvest business bown.
CHOR. Fare ye well, my jolly clown.
We wish ye joy.
You've a purchase tight and neat;
A rogue, a sycophant complete;
Fit to bang about and beat,
Fit to stand the cold and heat,
And all employ.
DIC. I'd a hard job with the rascal, tying him up!

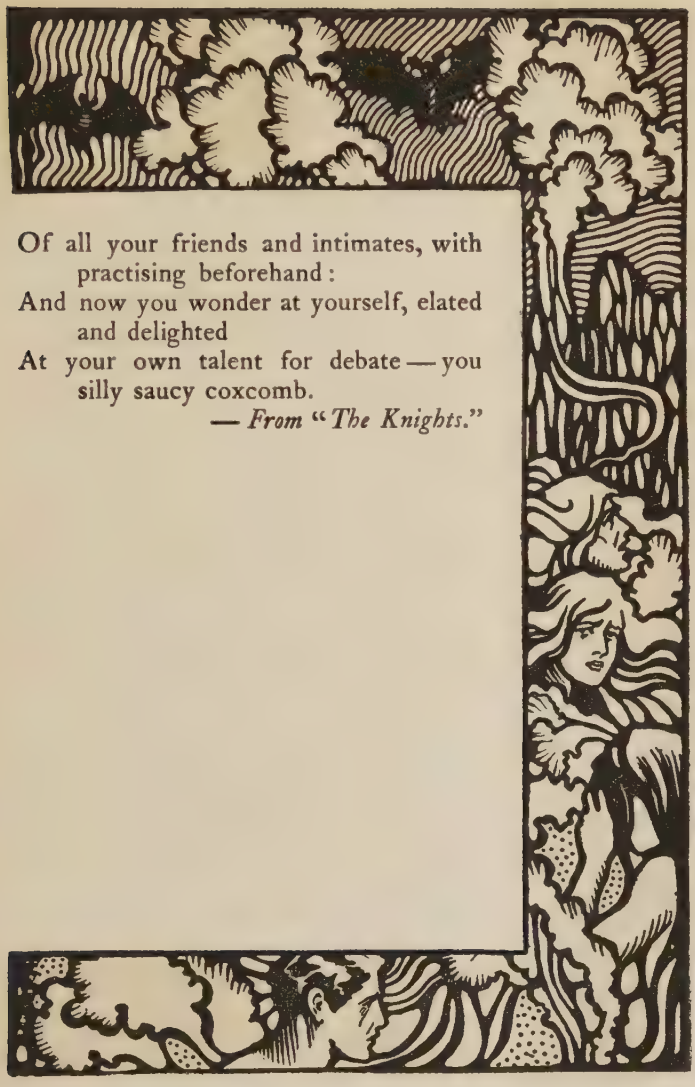


Come, my Bœotian, take away your
bargain.
THEB. [*speaking to one of his servants*].
Ismenias, stoop your back, and heave
him up.
There — softly and fairly — so — now
carry him off.
— *From* "*The Acharnians.*"



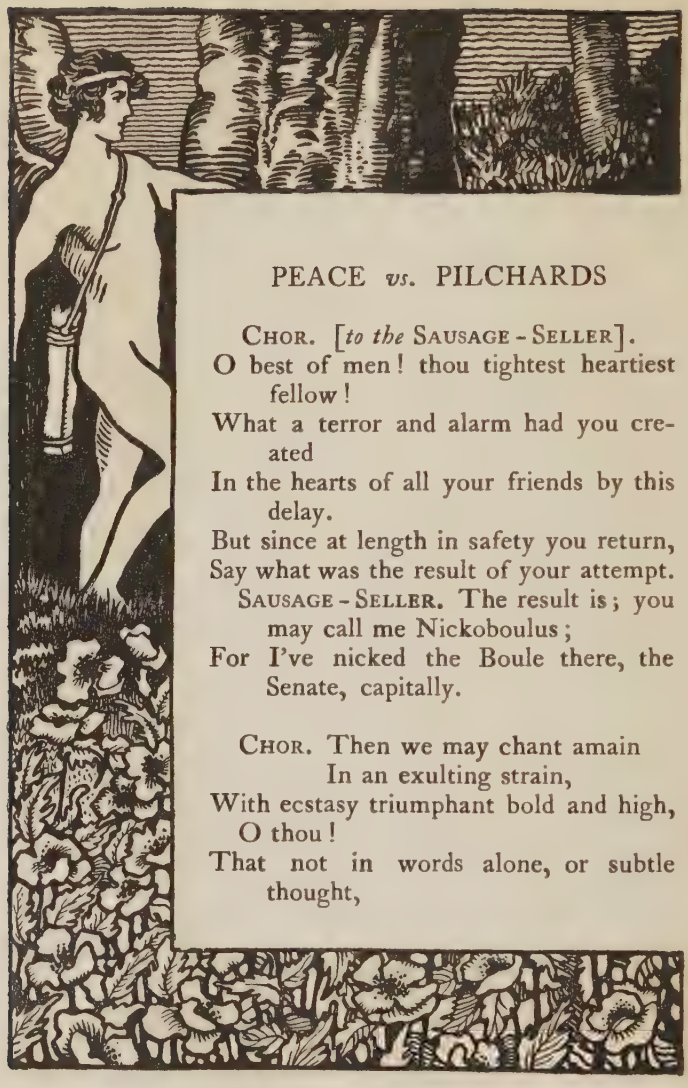
A DEBATER DESCRIBED

CLEON. Ay! You're a speaker, I suppose! I should enjoy to see you,
Like a pert scullion set to cook — to see your talents fairly
Put to the test, with hot blood-raw disjointed news arriving,
Obliged to hash and season it, and dish it in an instant.
You're like the rest of 'em — the swarm of paltry weak pretenders.
You've made your pretty speech perhaps, and gained a little lawsuit
Against a merchant foreigner, by dint of water-drinking,
And lying long awake o' nights, composing and repeating,
And studying as you walked the streets, and wearing out the patience



Of all your friends and intimates, with
practising beforehand:
And now you wonder at yourself, elated
and delighted
At your own talent for debate — you
silly saucy coxcomb.

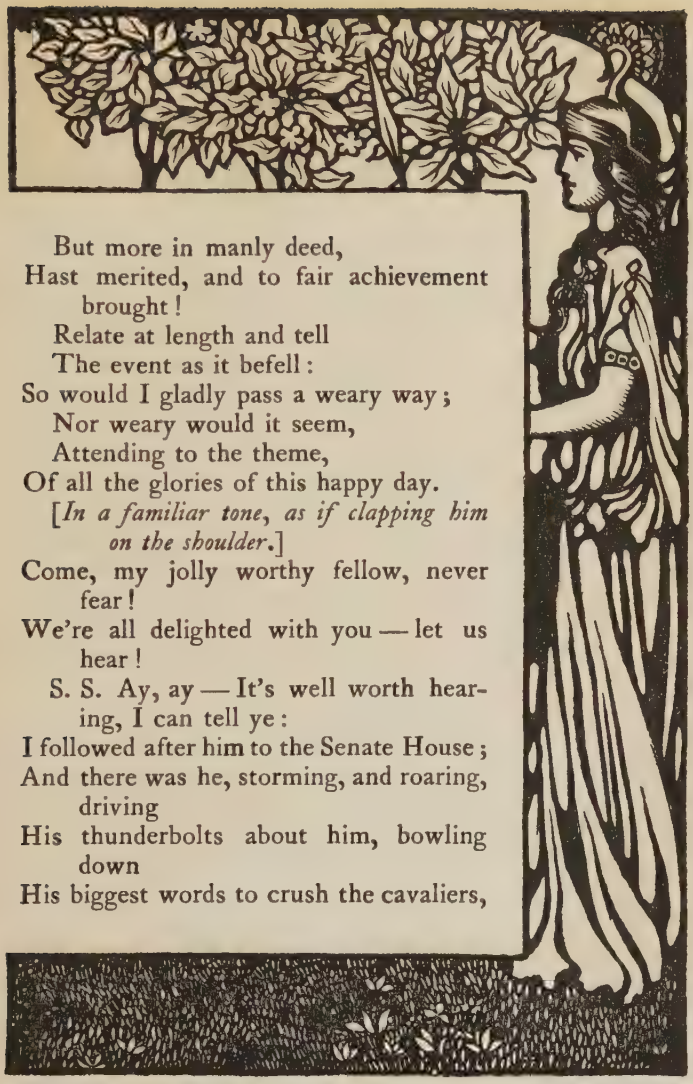
— *From "The Knights."*



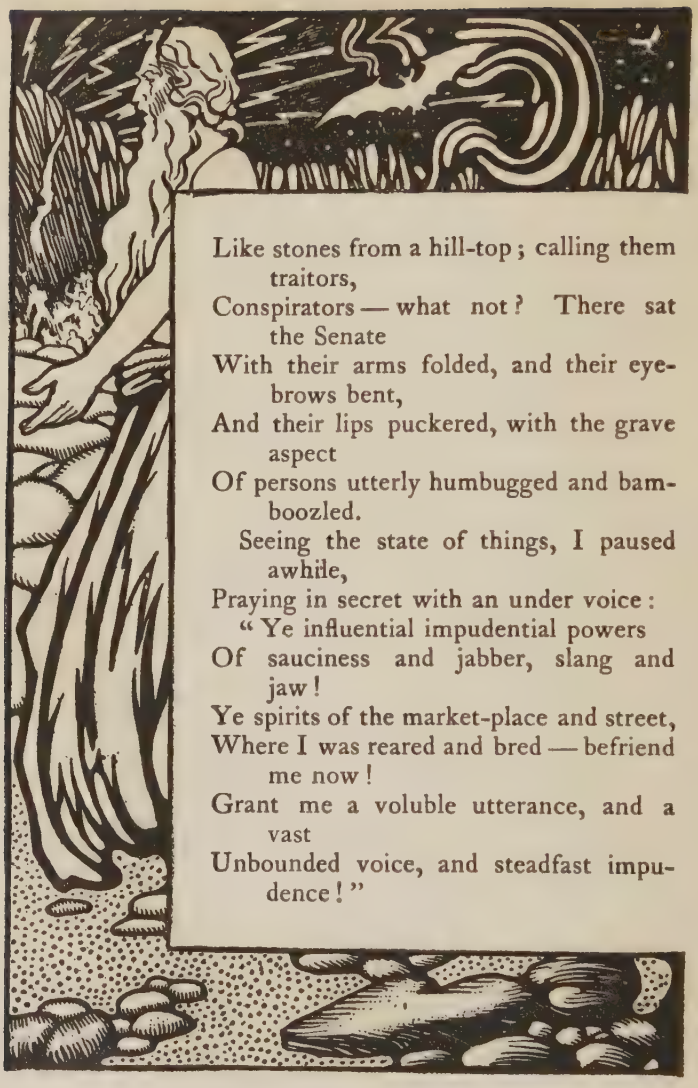
PEACE *vs.* PILCHARDS

CHOR. [*to the* SAUSAGE-SELLER].
O best of men! thou tightest heartiest fellow!
What a terror and alarm had you created
In the hearts of all your friends by this delay.
But since at length in safety you return,
Say what was the result of your attempt.
SAUSAGE-SELLER. The result is; you may call me Nickoboulus;
For I've nicked the Boule there, the Senate, capitally.

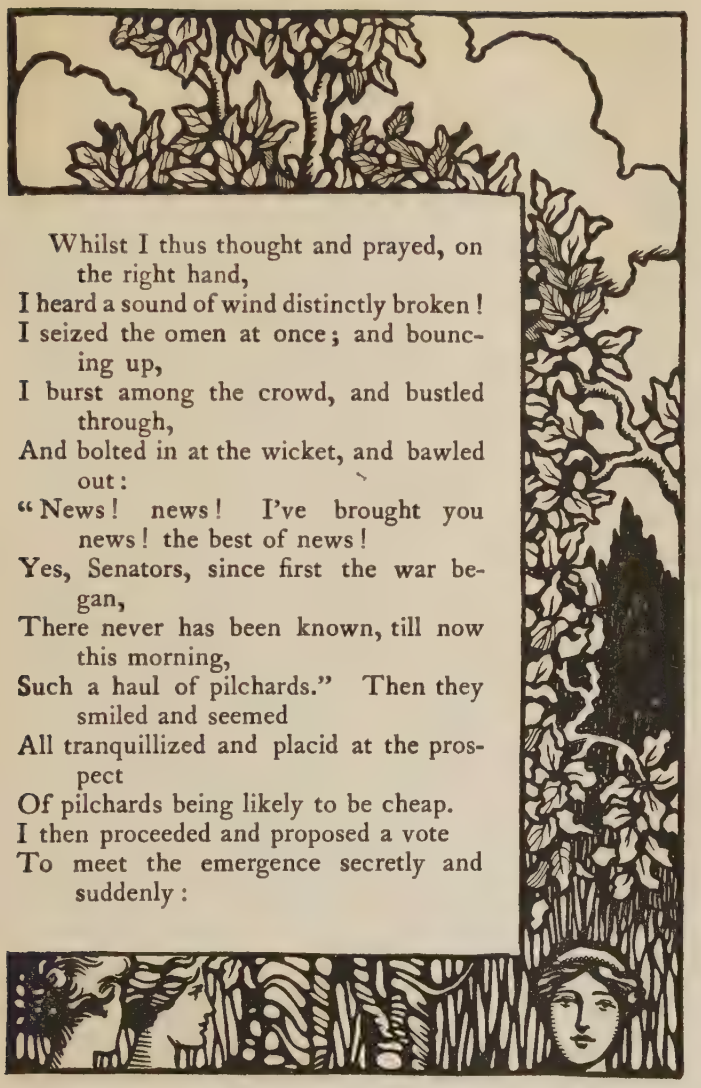
CHOR. Then we may chant amain
In an exulting strain,
With ecstasy triumphant bold and high,
O thou!
That not in words alone, or subtle thought,



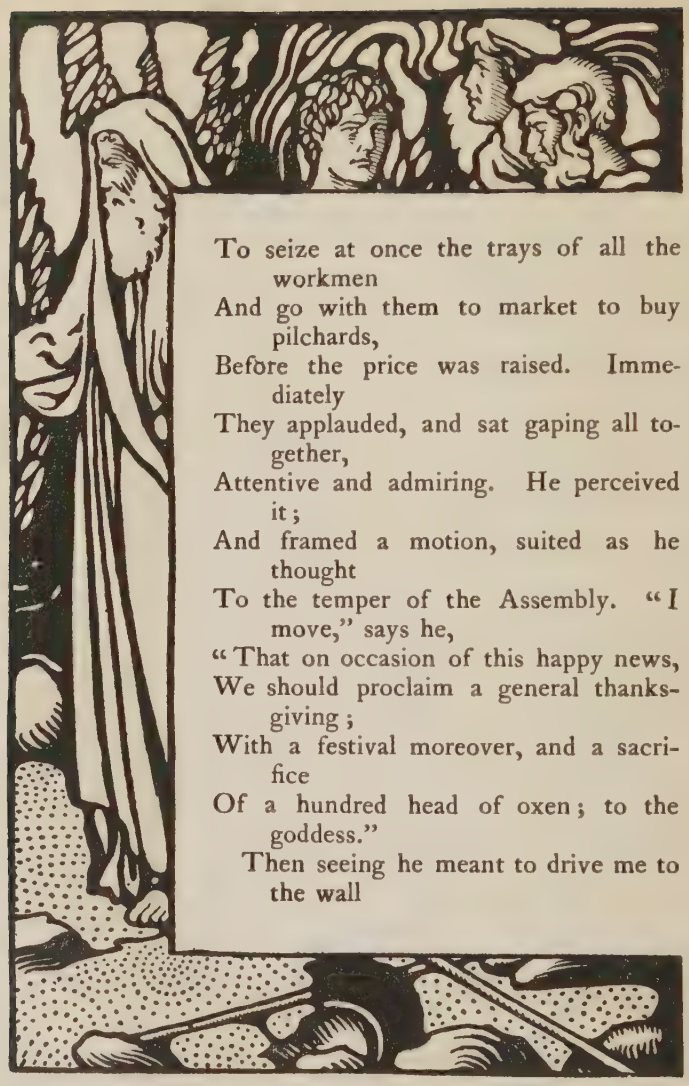
But more in manly deed,
Hast merited, and to fair achievement brought!
Relate at length and tell
The event as it befell:
So would I gladly pass a weary way;
Nor weary would it seem,
Attending to the theme,
Of all the glories of this happy day.
[*In a familiar tone, as if clapping him on the shoulder.*]
Come, my jolly worthy fellow, never fear!
We're all delighted with you — let us hear!
S. S. Ay, ay — It's well worth hearing, I can tell ye:
I followed after him to the Senate House;
And there was he, storming, and roaring, driving
His thunderbolts about him, bowling down
His biggest words to crush the cavaliers,



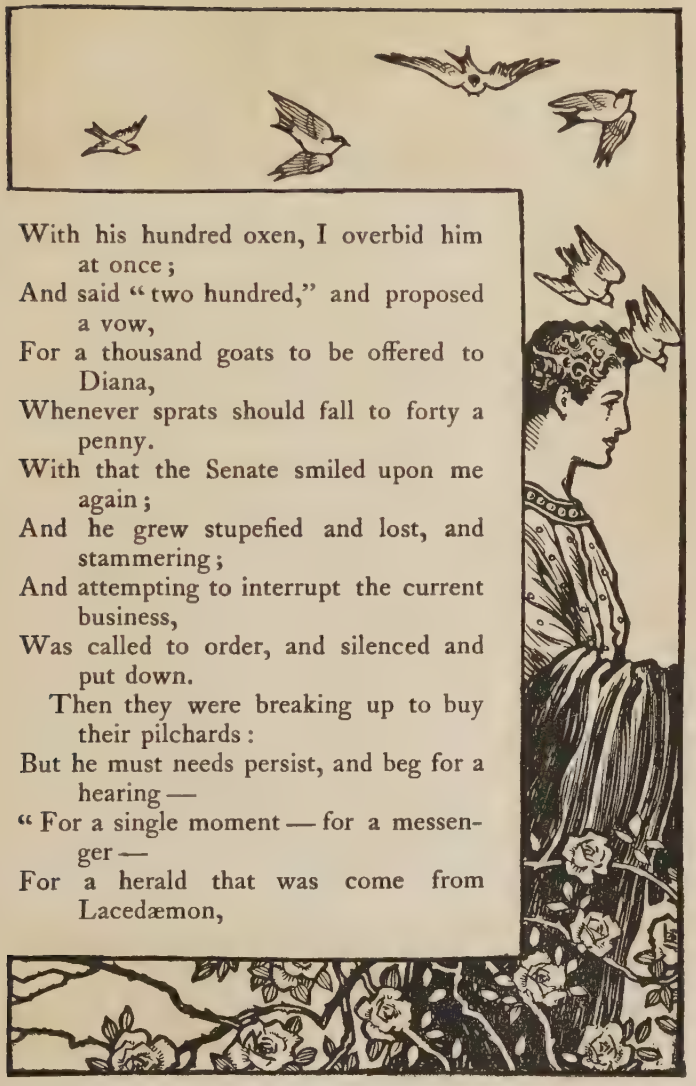
Like stones from a hill-top; calling them traitors,
Conspirators — what not? There sat the Senate
With their arms folded, and their eyebrows bent,
And their lips puckered, with the grave aspect
Of persons utterly humbugged and bamboozled.
Seeing the state of things, I paused awhile,
Praying in secret with an under voice:
"Ye influential impudential powers
Of sauciness and jabber, slang and jaw!
Ye spirits of the market-place and street,
Where I was reared and bred — befriend me now!
Grant me a voluble utterance, and a vast
Unbounded voice, and steadfast impudence!"



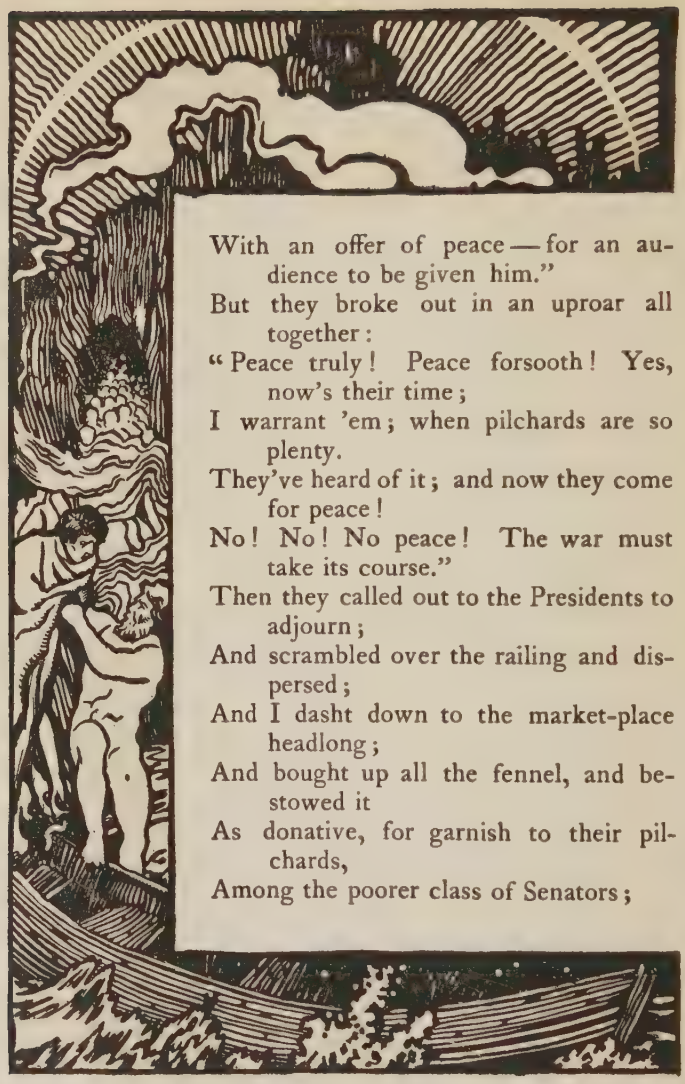
Whilst I thus thought and prayed, on the right hand,
I heard a sound of wind distinctly broken!
I seized the omen at once; and bouncing up,
I burst among the crowd, and bustled through,
And bolted in at the wicket, and bawled out:
"News! news! I've brought you news! the best of news!
Yes, Senators, since first the war began,
There never has been known, till now this morning,
Such a haul of pilchards." Then they smiled and seemed
All tranquillized and placid at the prospect
Of pilchards being likely to be cheap.
I then proceeded and proposed a vote
To meet the emergence secretly and suddenly:



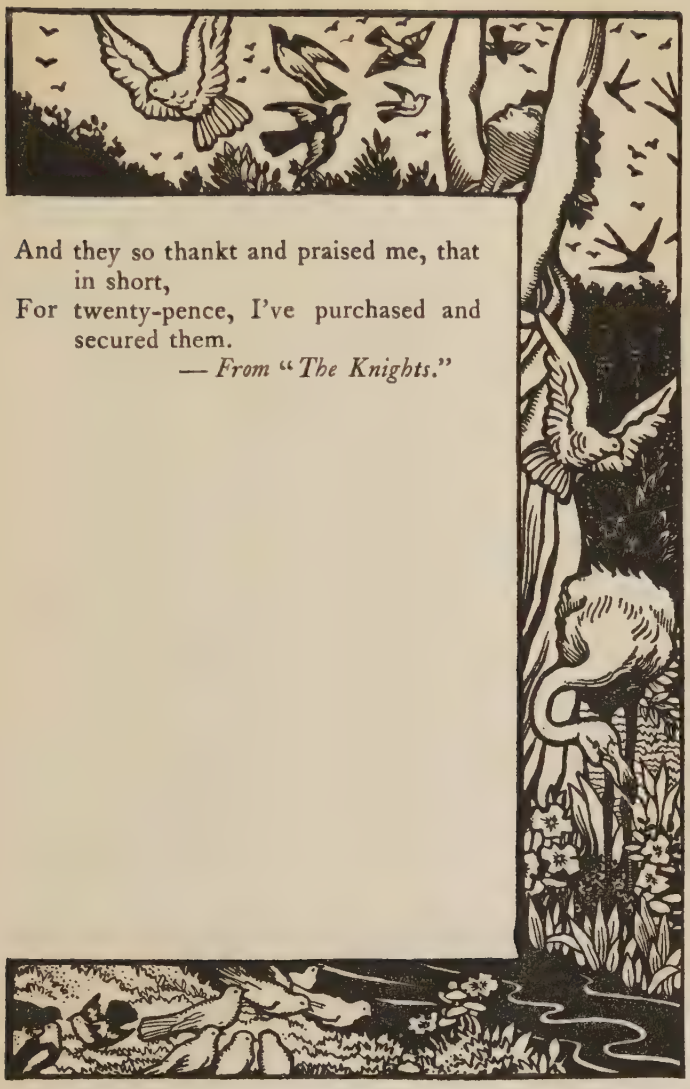
To seize at once the trays of all the workmen
And go with them to market to buy pilchards,
Before the price was raised. Immediately
They applauded, and sat gaping all together,
Attentive and admiring. He perceived it;
And framed a motion, suited as he thought
To the temper of the Assembly. "I move," says he,
"That on occasion of this happy news,
We should proclaim a general thanksgiving;
With a festival moreover, and a sacrifice
Of a hundred head of oxen; to the goddess."
Then seeing he meant to drive me to the wall



With his hundred oxen, I overbid him
at once;
And said "two hundred," and proposed
a vow,
For a thousand goats to be offered to
Diana,
Whenever sprats should fall to forty a
penny.
With that the Senate smiled upon me
again;
And he grew stupefied and lost, and
stammering;
And attempting to interrupt the current
business,
Was called to order, and silenced and
put down.
Then they were breaking up to buy
their pilchards:
But he must needs persist, and beg for a
hearing —
"For a single moment — for a messen-
ger —
For a herald that was come from
Lacedæmon,

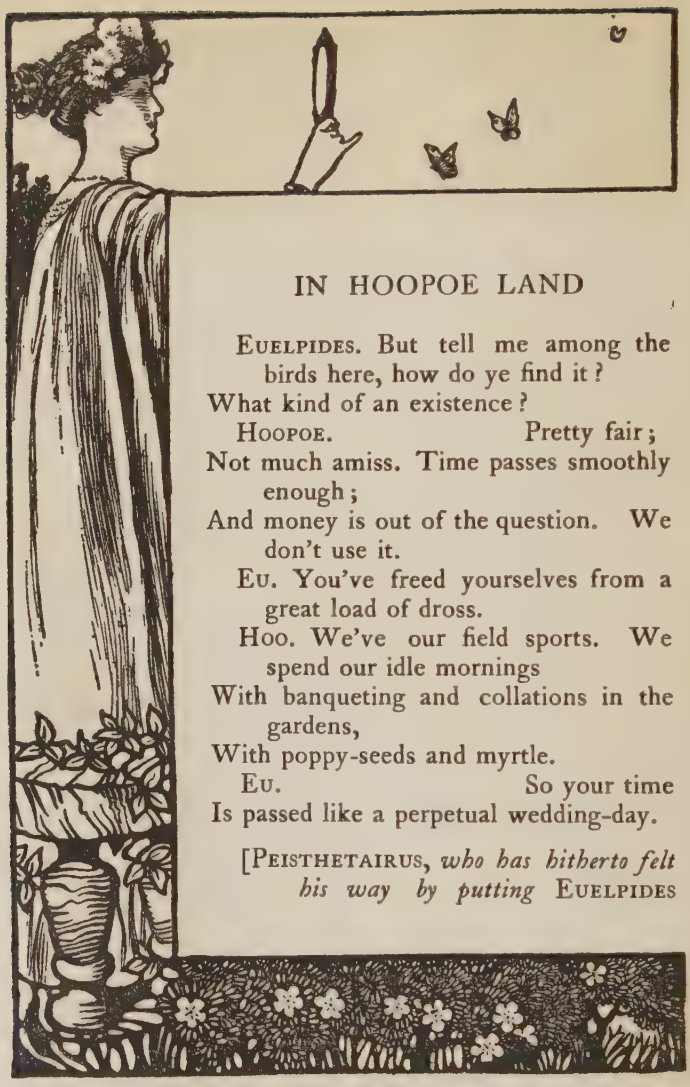


With an offer of peace — for an audience to be given him."
But they broke out in an uproar all together:
"Peace truly! Peace forsooth! Yes, now's their time;
I warrant 'em; when pilchards are so plenty.
They've heard of it; and now they come for peace!
No! No! No peace! The war must take its course."
Then they called out to the Presidents to adjourn;
And scrambled over the railing and dispersed;
And I dasht down to the market-place headlong;
And bought up all the fennel, and bestowed it
As donative, for garnish to their pilchards,
Among the poorer class of Senators;



And they so thankt and praised me, that in short,
For twenty-pence, I've purchased and secured them.

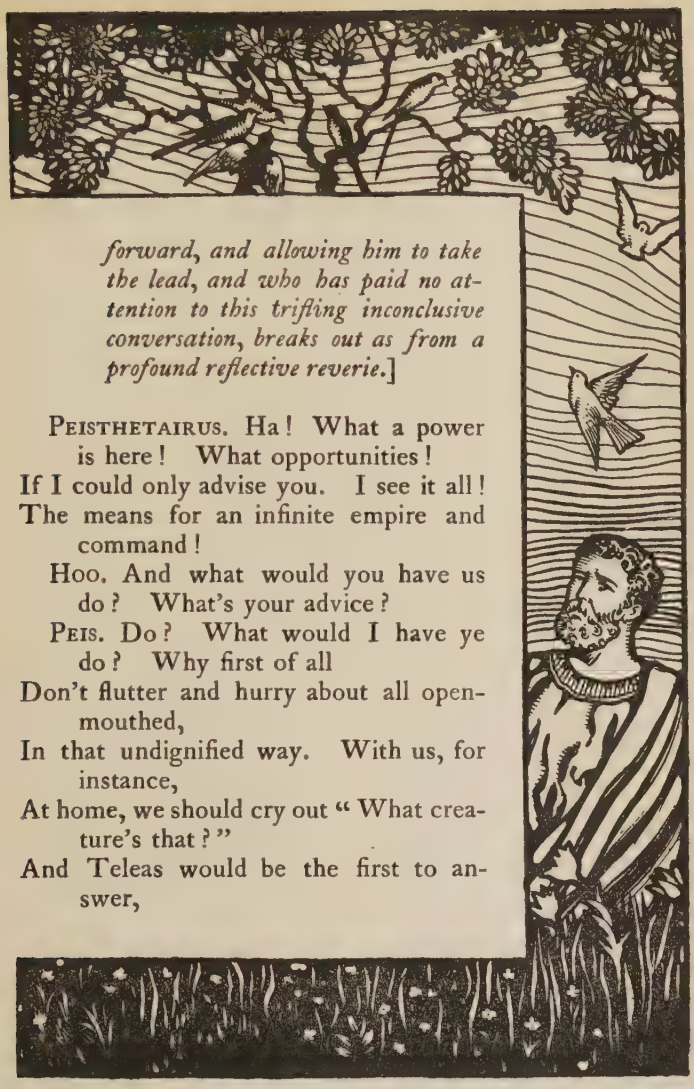
— *From "The Knights."*



IN HOOPOE LAND

EUELPIDES. But tell me among the birds here, how do ye find it?
What kind of an existence?
HOOPOE. Pretty fair;
Not much amiss. Time passes smoothly enough;
And money is out of the question. We don't use it.
EU. You've freed yourselves from a great load of dross.
HOO. We've our field sports. We spend our idle mornings
With banqueting and collations in the gardens,
With poppy-seeds and myrtle.
EU. So your time
Is passed like a perpetual wedding-day.

[PEISTHETAIRUS, *who has hitherto felt his way by putting* EUELPIDES

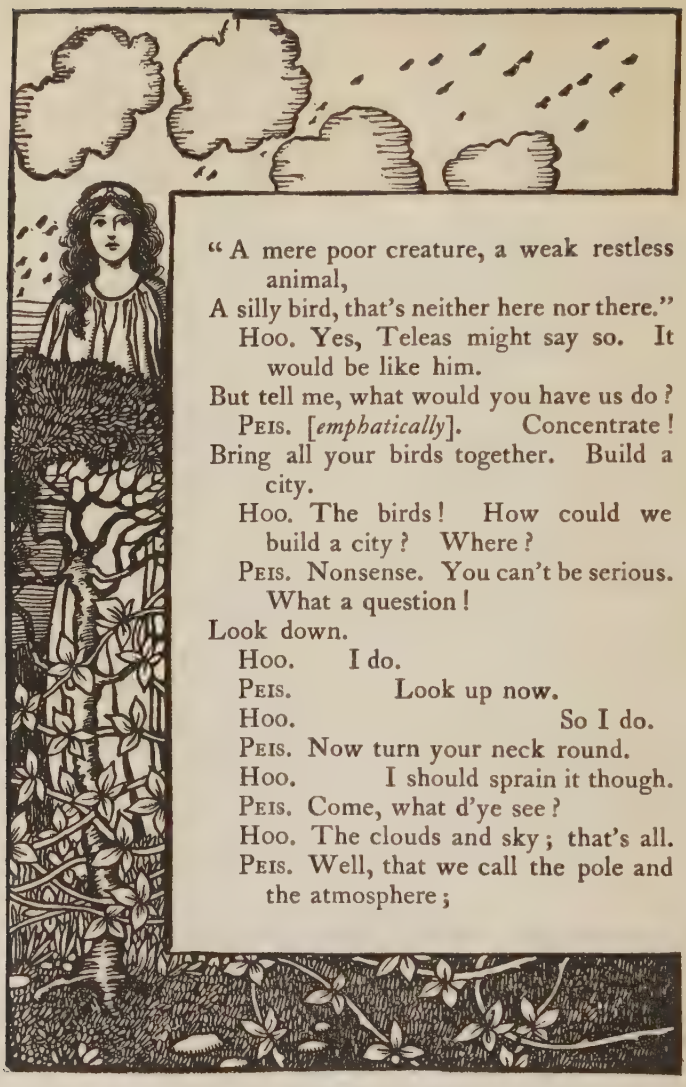


forward, and allowing him to take the lead, and who has paid no attention to this trifling inconclusive conversation, breaks out as from a profound reflective reverie.]

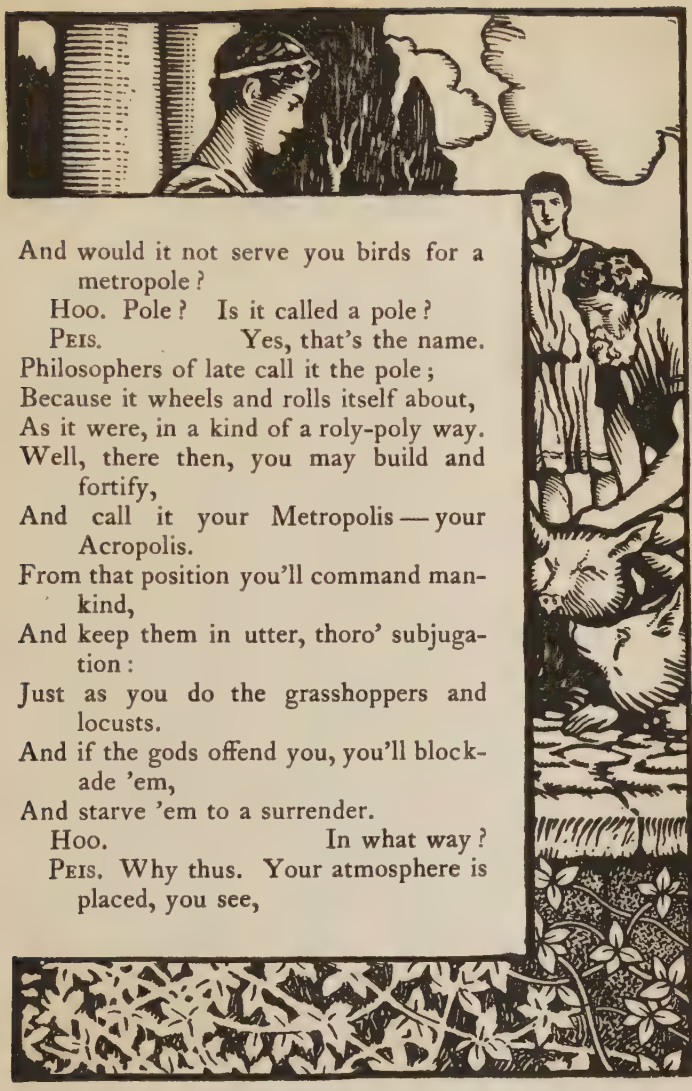
PEISTHETAIRUS. Ha! What a power is here! What opportunities!
If I could only advise you. I see it all!
The means for an infinite empire and command!

HOO. And what would you have us do? What's your advice?

PEIS. Do? What would I have ye do? Why first of all
Don't flutter and hurry about all open-mouthed,
In that undignified way. With us, for instance,
At home, we should cry out "What creature's that?"
And Teleas would be the first to answer,



"A mere poor creature, a weak restless animal,
A silly bird, that's neither here nor there."
Hoo. Yes, Teleas might say so. It would be like him.
But tell me, what would you have us do?
Peis. [*emphatically*]. Concentrate!
Bring all your birds together. Build a city.
Hoo. The birds! How could we build a city? Where?
Peis. Nonsense. You can't be serious. What a question!
Look down.
Hoo. I do.
Peis. Look up now.
Hoo. So I do.
Peis. Now turn your neck round.
Hoo. I should sprain it though.
Peis. Come, what d'ye see?
Hoo. The clouds and sky; that's all.
Peis. Well, that we call the pole and the atmosphere;



And would it not serve you birds for a metropole?

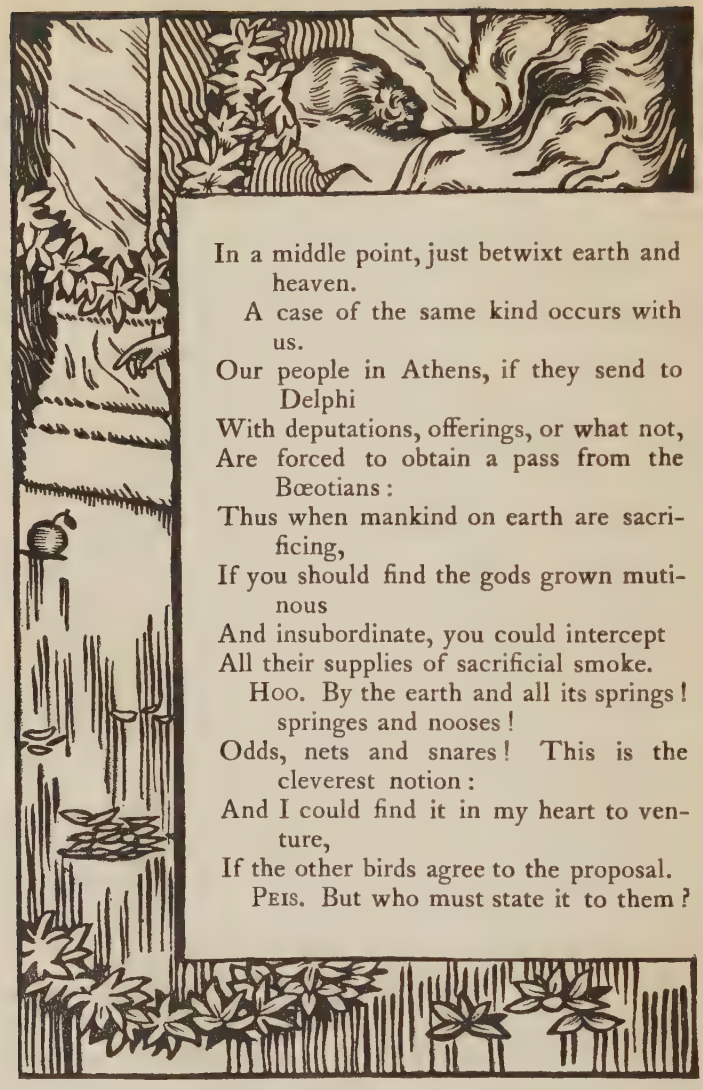
Hoo. Pole? Is it called a pole?

Peis. Yes, that's the name.

Philosophers of late call it the pole;
Because it wheels and rolls itself about,
As it were, in a kind of a roly-poly way.
Well, there then, you may build and fortify,
And call it your Metropolis — your Acropolis.
From that position you'll command mankind,
And keep them in utter, thoro' subjugation:
Just as you do the grasshoppers and locusts.
And if the gods offend you, you'll blockade 'em,
And starve 'em to a surrender.

Hoo. In what way?

Peis. Why thus. Your atmosphere is placed, you see,



In a middle point, just betwixt earth and heaven.
A case of the same kind occurs with us.
Our people in Athens, if they send to Delphi
With deputations, offerings, or what not,
Are forced to obtain a pass from the Bœotians:
Thus when mankind on earth are sacrificing,
If you should find the gods grown mutinous
And insubordinate, you could intercept
All their supplies of sacrificial smoke.
Hoo. By the earth and all its springs! springes and nooses!
Odds, nets and snares! This is the cleverest notion:
And I could find it in my heart to venture,
If the other birds agree to the proposal.
Peis. But who must state it to them?



Hoo. You yourself,
They'll understand ye, I found them mere barbarians,
But living here a length of time amongst them,
I have taught them to converse and speak correctly.
Peis. How will you summon them?
Hoo. That's easy enough;
I'll just step into the thicket here hard by,
And call my nightingale. She'll summon them.
And when they hear her voice, I promise you
You'll see them all come running here pell-mell.
Peis. My dearest, best of birds! don't lose a moment,
I beg, but go directly into the thicket;
Nay, don't stand here, go call your nightingale.

[*Exit* Hoopoe.

— *From "The Birds."*

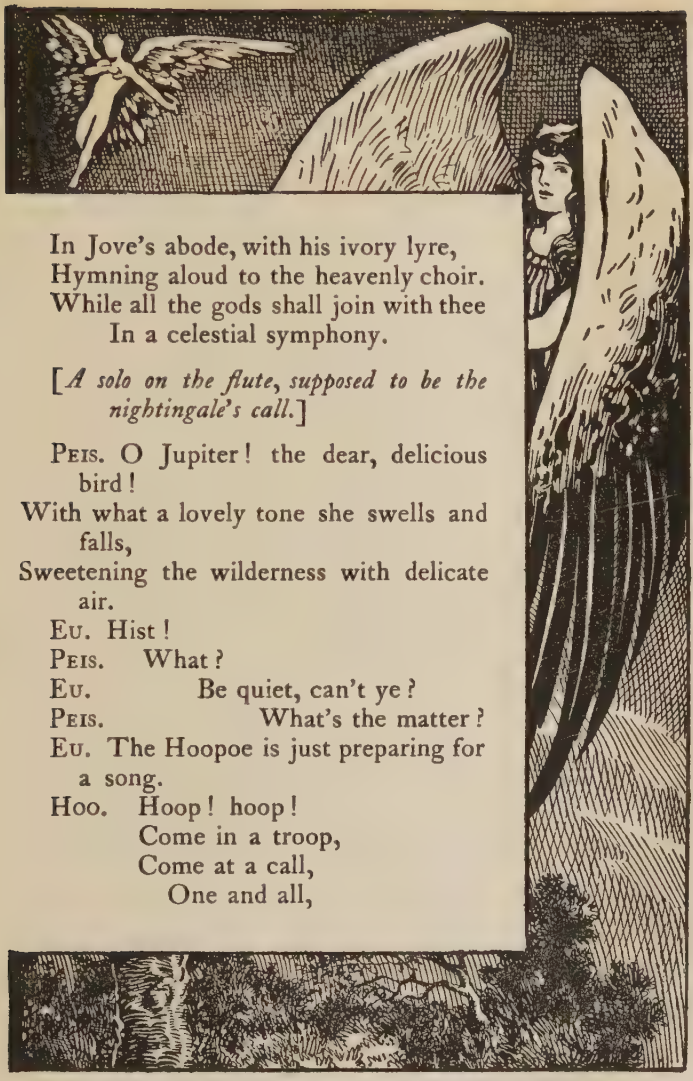




THE CALL TO THE NIGHTINGALE

[*Song from behind the scene, supposed to be sung by the* HOOPOE.]

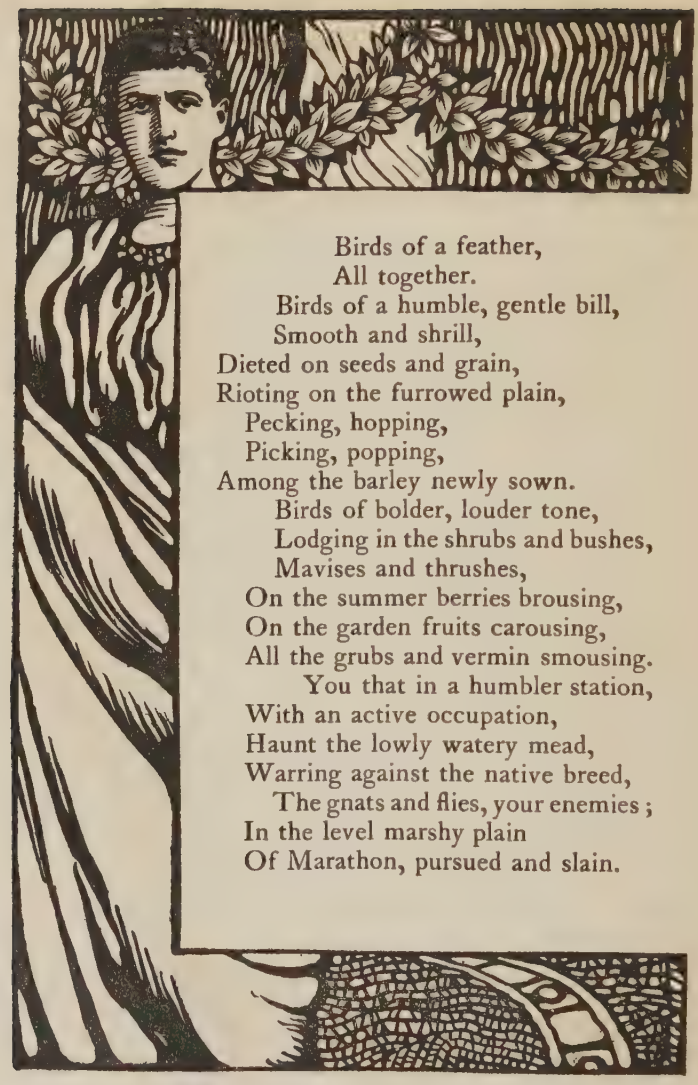
AWAKE! awake!
Sleep no more, my gentle mate!
With your tiny tawny bill,
Wake the tuneful echo shrill,
On vale or hill;
Or in her airy, rocky seat,
Let her listen and repeat
The tender ditty that you tell,
The sad lament,
The dire event,
To luckless Itys that befell.
Thence the strain
Shall rise again,
And soar amain,
Up to the lofty palace gate;
Where mighty Apollo sits in state;



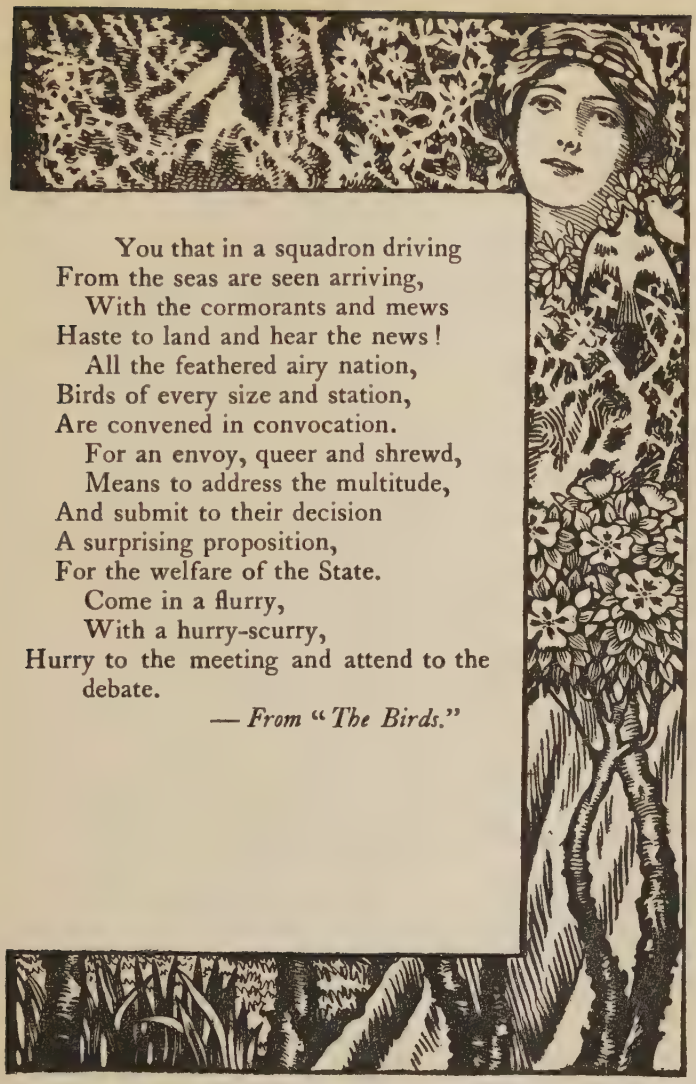
In Jove's abode, with his ivory lyre,
Hymning aloud to the heavenly choir.
While all the gods shall join with thee
In a celestial symphony.

[*A solo on the flute, supposed to be the nightingale's call.*]

PEIS. O Jupiter! the dear, delicious bird!
With what a lovely tone she swells and falls,
Sweetening the wilderness with delicate air.
EU. Hist!
PEIS. What?
EU. Be quiet, can't ye?
PEIS. What's the matter?
EU. The Hoopoe is just preparing for a song.
HOO. Hoop! hoop!
Come in a troop,
Come at a call,
One and all,

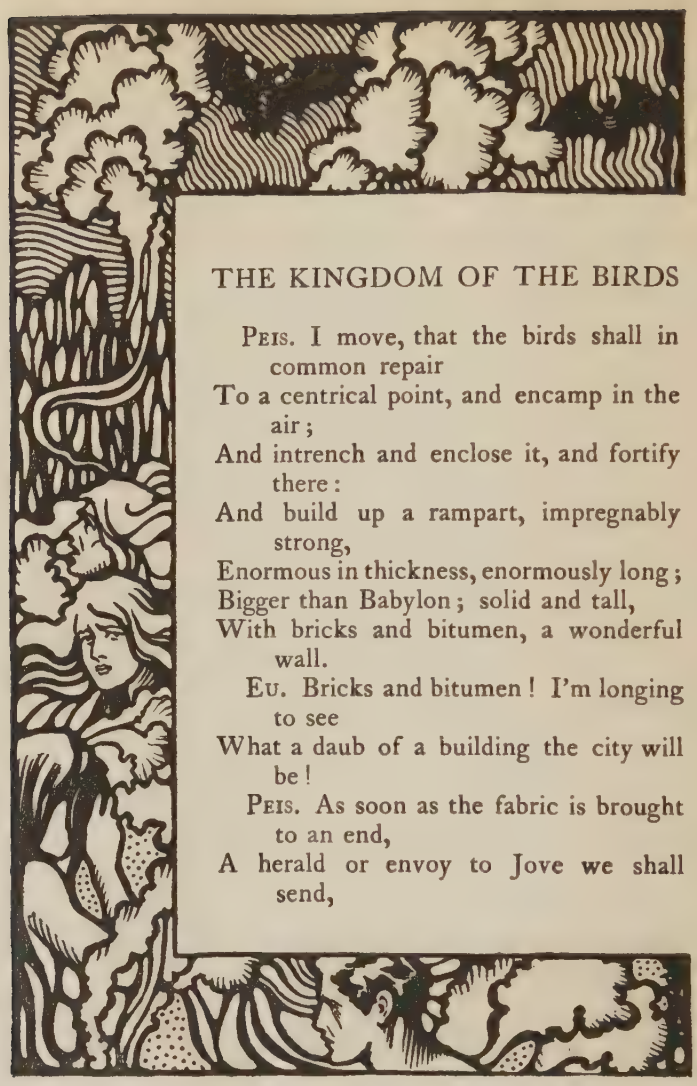


Birds of a feather,
All together.
Birds of a humble, gentle bill,
Smooth and shrill,
Dieted on seeds and grain,
Rioting on the furrowed plain,
Pecking, hopping,
Picking, popping,
Among the barley newly sown.
Birds of bolder, louder tone,
Lodging in the shrubs and bushes,
Mavises and thrushes,
On the summer berries brousing,
On the garden fruits carousing,
All the grubs and vermin smousing.
You that in a humbler station,
With an active occupation,
Haunt the lowly watery mead,
Warring against the native breed,
The gnats and flies, your enemies;
In the level marshy plain
Of Marathon, pursued and slain.



You that in a squadron driving
From the seas are seen arriving,
With the cormorants and mews
Haste to land and hear the news!
All the feathered airy nation,
Birds of every size and station,
Are convened in convocation.
For an envoy, queer and shrewd,
Means to address the multitude,
And submit to their decision
A surprising proposition,
For the welfare of the State.
Come in a flurry,
With a hurry-scurry,
Hurry to the meeting and attend to the debate.

— *From "The Birds."*

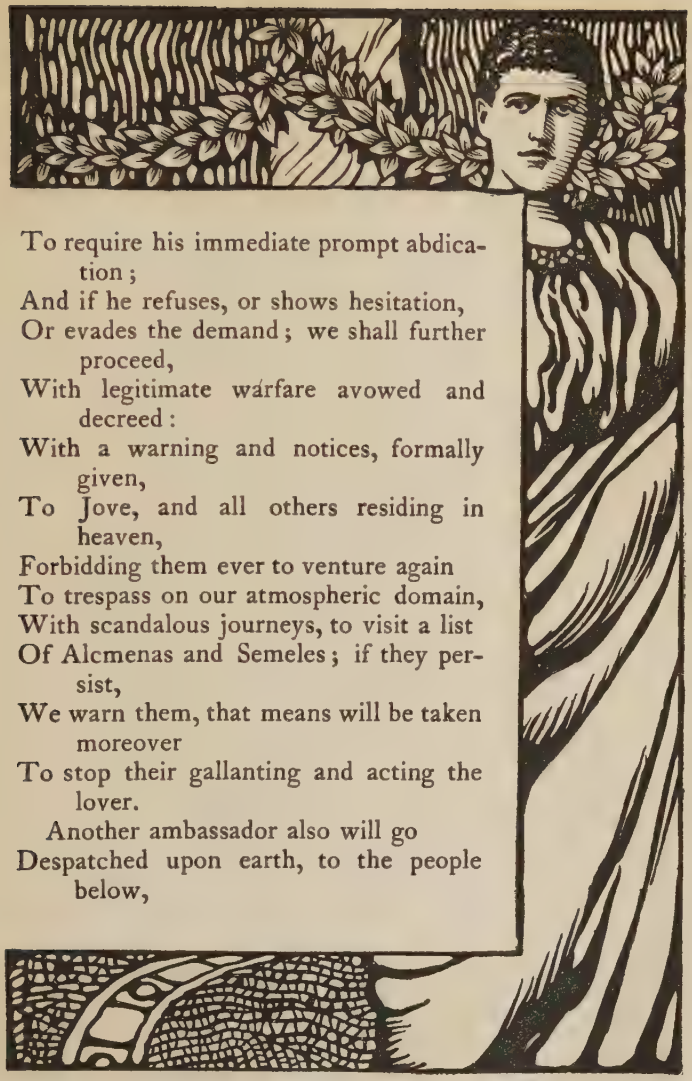


THE KINGDOM OF THE BIRDS

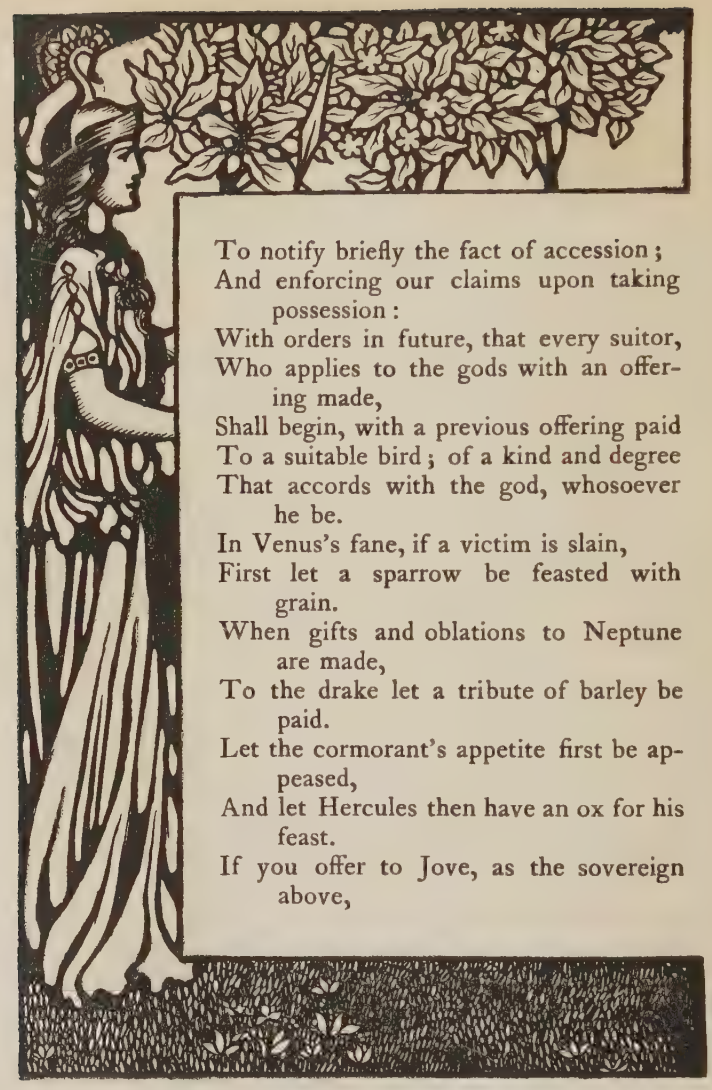
PEIS. I move, that the birds shall in common repair
To a centrical point, and encamp in the air;
And intrench and enclose it, and fortify there:
And build up a rampart, impregnably strong,
Enormous in thickness, enormously long;
Bigger than Babylon; solid and tall,
With bricks and bitumen, a wonderful wall.

EU. Bricks and bitumen! I'm longing to see
What a daub of a building the city will be!

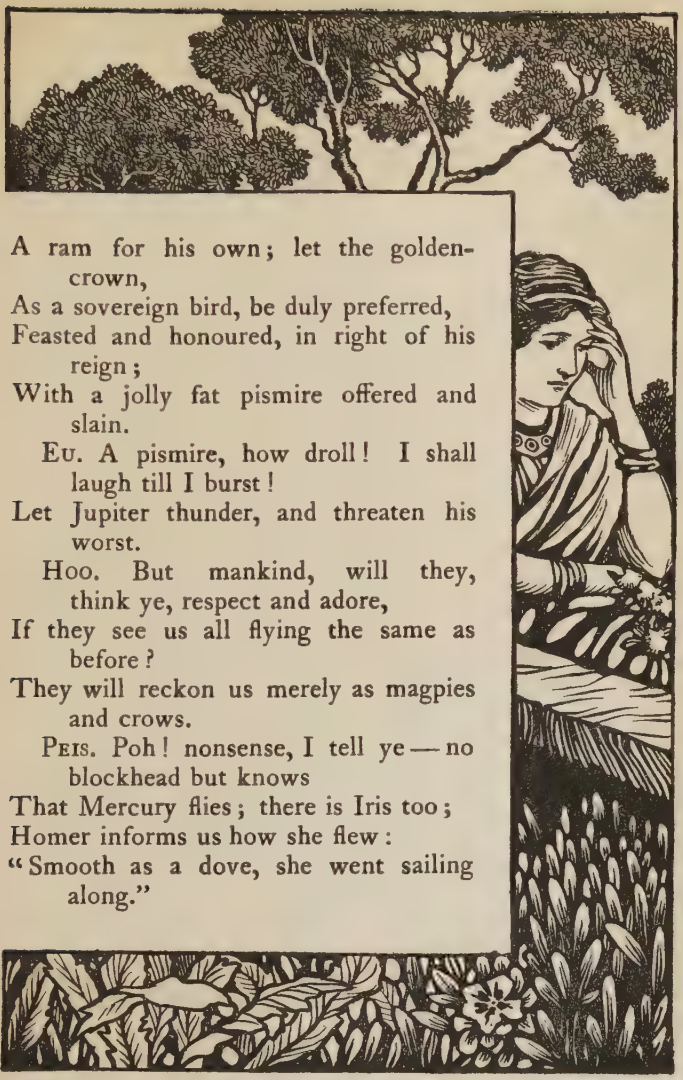
PEIS. As soon as the fabric is brought to an end,
A herald or envoy to Jove we shall send,



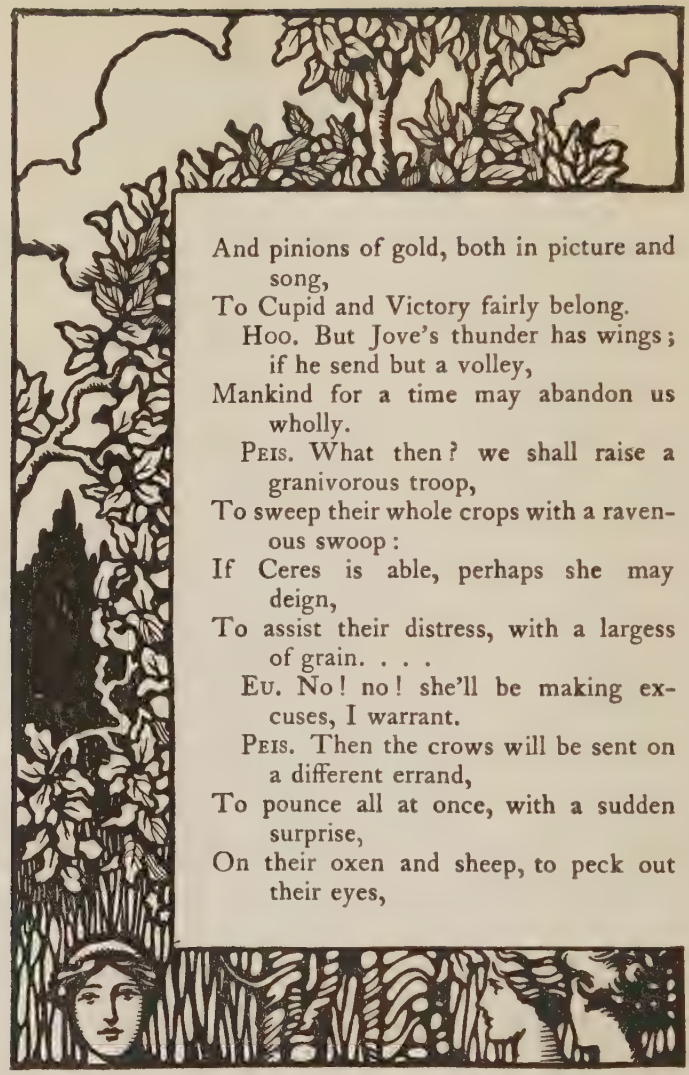
To require his immediate prompt abdication;
And if he refuses, or shows hesitation,
Or evades the demand; we shall further proceed,
With legitimate warfare avowed and decreed:
With a warning and notices, formally given,
To Jove, and all others residing in heaven,
Forbidding them ever to venture again
To trespass on our atmospheric domain,
With scandalous journeys, to visit a list
Of Alcmenas and Semeles; if they persist,
We warn them, that means will be taken moreover
To stop their gallanting and acting the lover.
Another ambassador also will go
Despatched upon earth, to the people below,



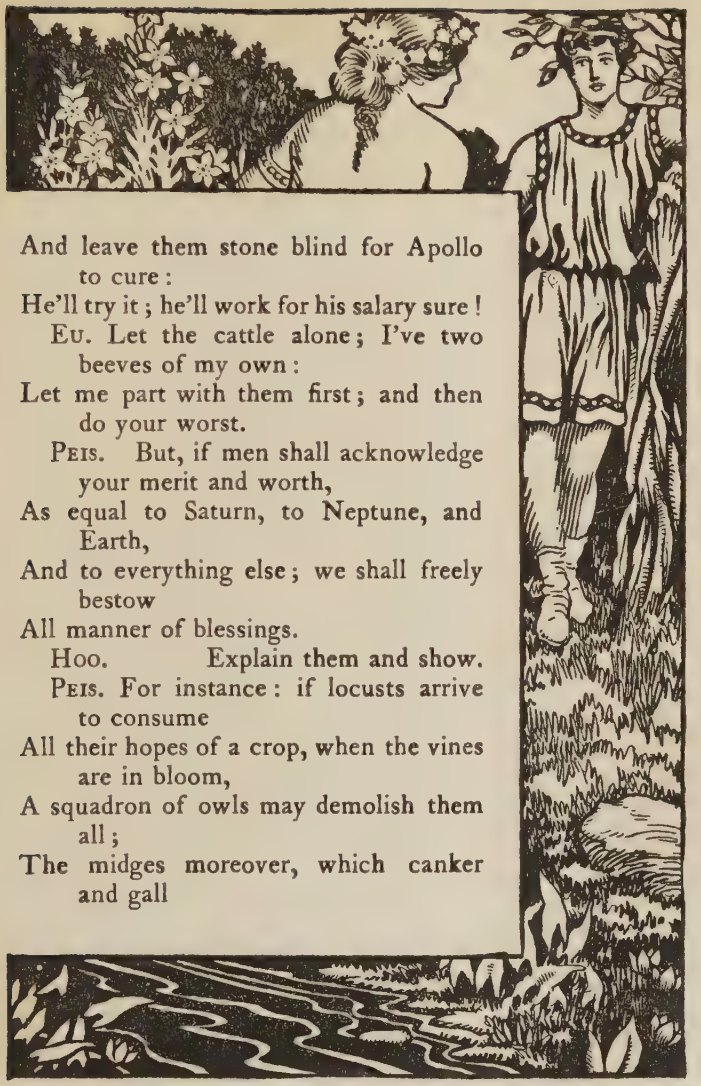
To notify briefly the fact of accession;
And enforcing our claims upon taking possession:
With orders in future, that every suitor,
Who applies to the gods with an offering made,
Shall begin, with a previous offering paid
To a suitable bird; of a kind and degree
That accords with the god, whosoever he be.
In Venus's fane, if a victim is slain,
First let a sparrow be feasted with grain.
When gifts and oblations to Neptune are made,
To the drake let a tribute of barley be paid.
Let the cormorant's appetite first be appeased,
And let Hercules then have an ox for his feast.
If you offer to Jove, as the sovereign above,



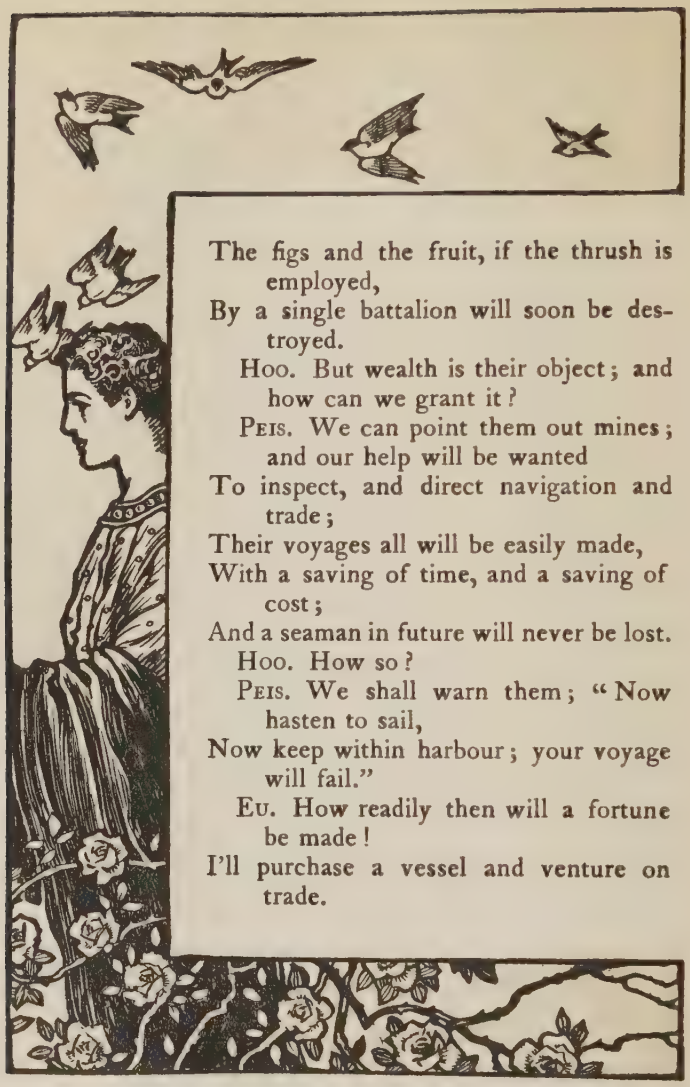
A ram for his own; let the golden-
crown,
As a sovereign bird, be duly preferred,
Feasted and honoured, in right of his
reign;
With a jolly fat pismire offered and
slain.
EU. A pismire, how droll! I shall
laugh till I burst!
Let Jupiter thunder, and threaten his
worst.
HOO. But mankind, will they,
think ye, respect and adore,
If they see us all flying the same as
before?
They will reckon us merely as magpies
and crows.
PEIS. Poh! nonsense, I tell ye — no
blockhead but knows
That Mercury flies; there is Iris too;
Homer informs us how she flew:
"Smooth as a dove, she went sailing
along."



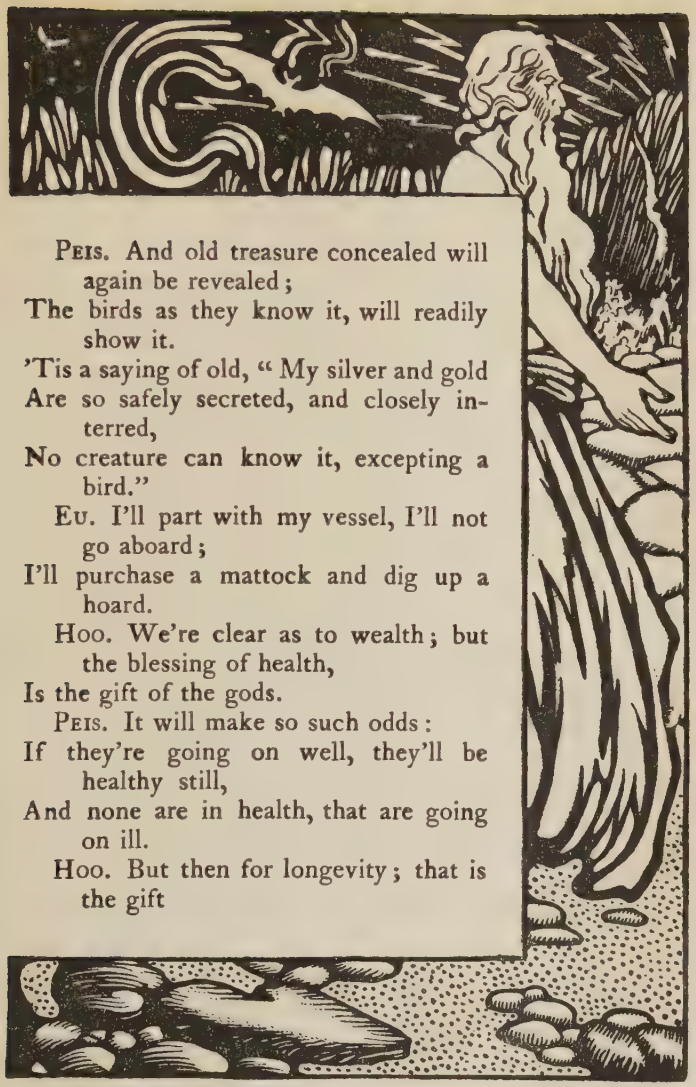
And pinions of gold, both in picture and song,
To Cupid and Victory fairly belong.
Hoo. But Jove's thunder has wings; if he send but a volley,
Mankind for a time may abandon us wholly.
Peis. What then? we shall raise a granivorous troop,
To sweep their whole crops with a ravenous swoop:
If Ceres is able, perhaps she may deign,
To assist their distress, with a largess of grain. . . .
Eu. No! no! she'll be making excuses, I warrant.
Peis. Then the crows will be sent on a different errand,
To pounce all at once, with a sudden surprise,
On their oxen and sheep, to peck out their eyes,



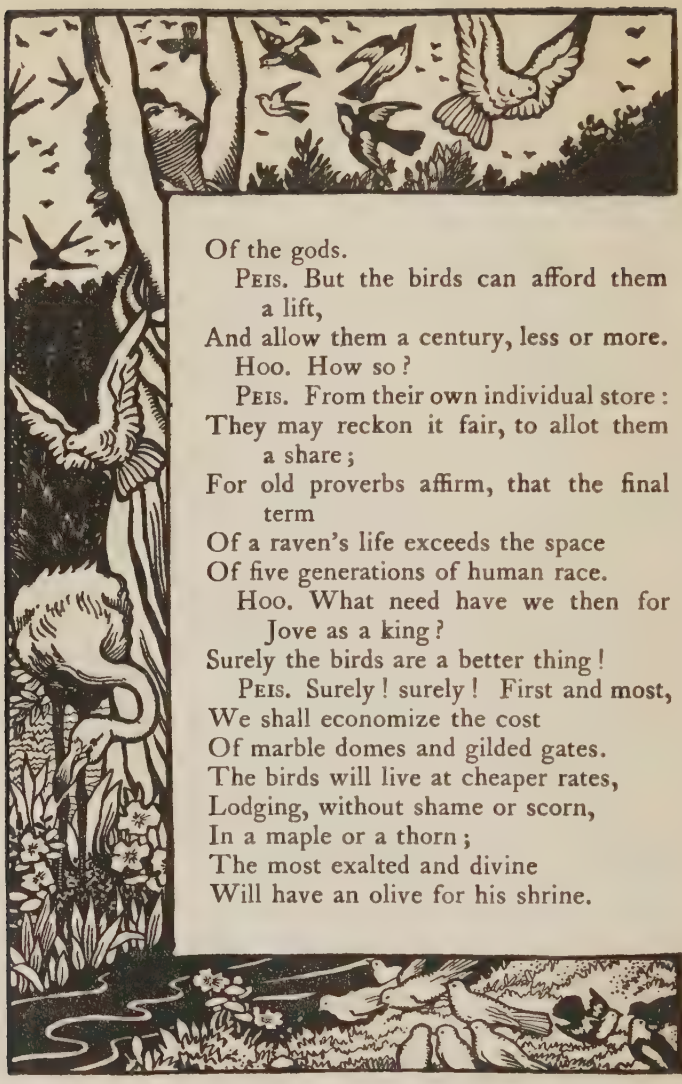
And leave them stone blind for Apollo
to cure:
He'll try it; he'll work for his salary sure!
EU. Let the cattle alone; I've two
beeves of my own:
Let me part with them first; and then
do your worst.
PEIS. But, if men shall acknowledge
your merit and worth,
As equal to Saturn, to Neptune, and
Earth,
And to everything else; we shall freely
bestow
All manner of blessings.
HOO. Explain them and show.
PEIS. For instance: if locusts arrive
to consume
All their hopes of a crop, when the vines
are in bloom,
A squadron of owls may demolish them
all;
The midges moreover, which canker
and gall



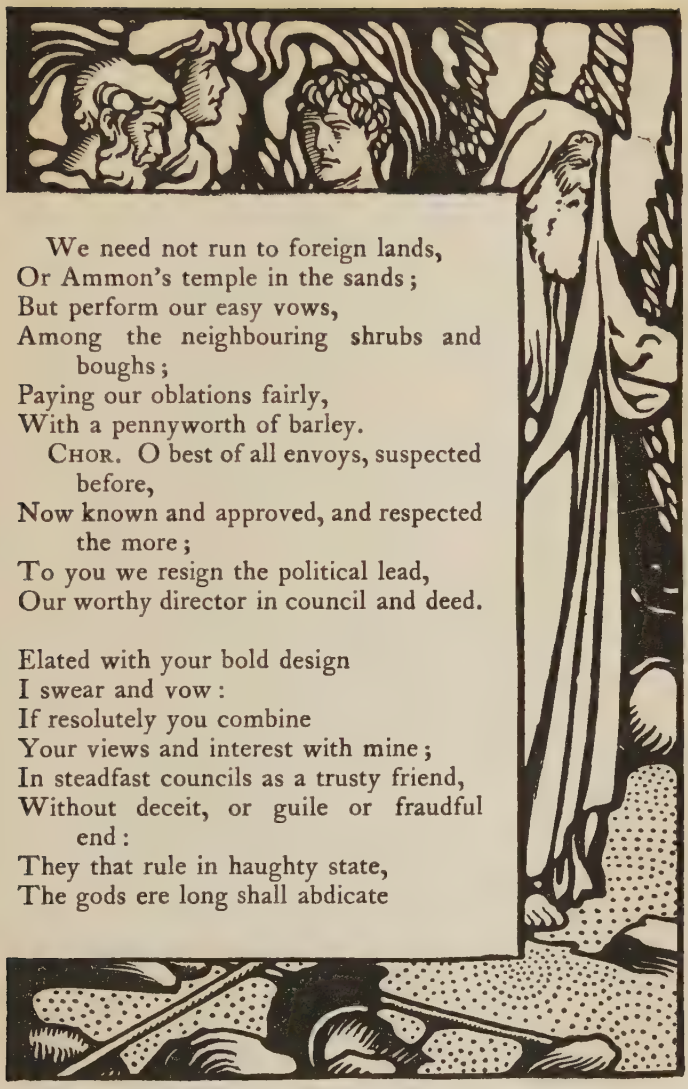
The figs and the fruit, if the thrush is employed,
By a single battalion will soon be destroyed.
Hoo. But wealth is their object; and how can we grant it?
Peis. We can point them out mines; and our help will be wanted
To inspect, and direct navigation and trade;
Their voyages all will be easily made,
With a saving of time, and a saving of cost;
And a seaman in future will never be lost.
Hoo. How so?
Peis. We shall warn them; "Now hasten to sail,
Now keep within harbour; your voyage will fail."
Eu. How readily then will a fortune be made!
I'll purchase a vessel and venture on trade.



Peis. And old treasure concealed will
again be revealed;
The birds as they know it, will readily
show it.
'Tis a saying of old, "My silver and gold
Are so safely secreted, and closely in-
terred,
No creature can know it, excepting a
bird."
Eu. I'll part with my vessel, I'll not
go aboard;
I'll purchase a mattock and dig up a
hoard.
Hoo. We're clear as to wealth; but
the blessing of health,
Is the gift of the gods.
Peis. It will make so such odds:
If they're going on well, they'll be
healthy still,
And none are in health, that are going
on ill.
Hoo. But then for longevity; that is
the gift

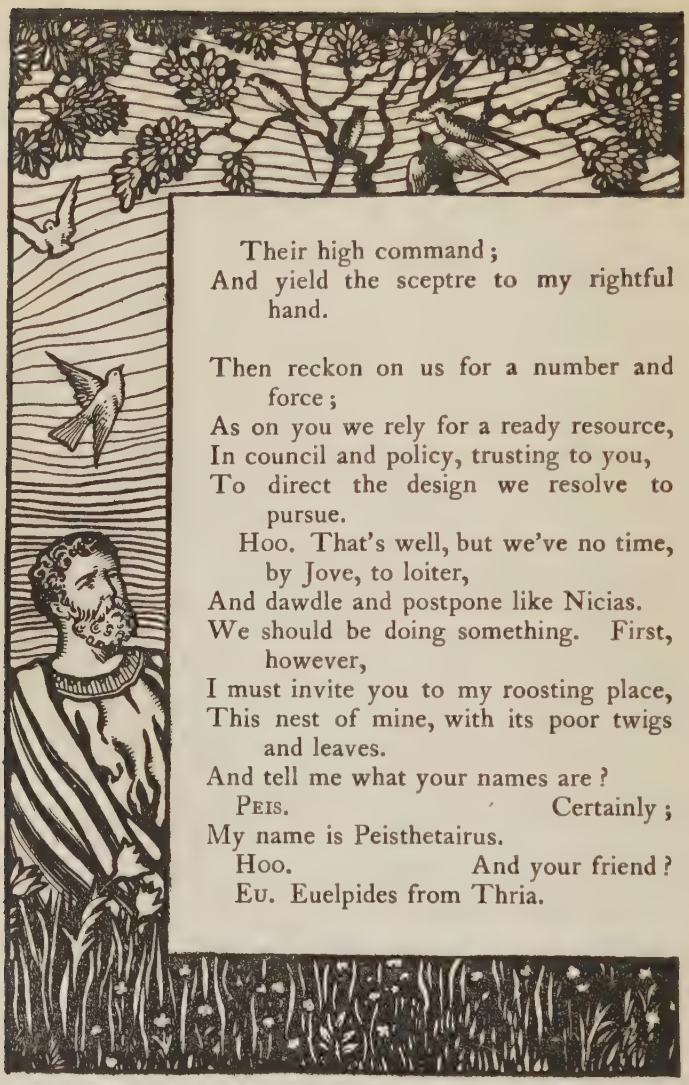


Of the gods.
PEIS. But the birds can afford them a lift,
And allow them a century, less or more.
HOO. How so?
PEIS. From their own individual store:
They may reckon it fair, to allot them a share;
For old proverbs affirm, that the final term
Of a raven's life exceeds the space
Of five generations of human race.
HOO. What need have we then for Jove as a king?
Surely the birds are a better thing!
PEIS. Surely! surely! First and most,
We shall economize the cost
Of marble domes and gilded gates.
The birds will live at cheaper rates,
Lodging, without shame or scorn,
In a maple or a thorn;
The most exalted and divine
Will have an olive for his shrine.



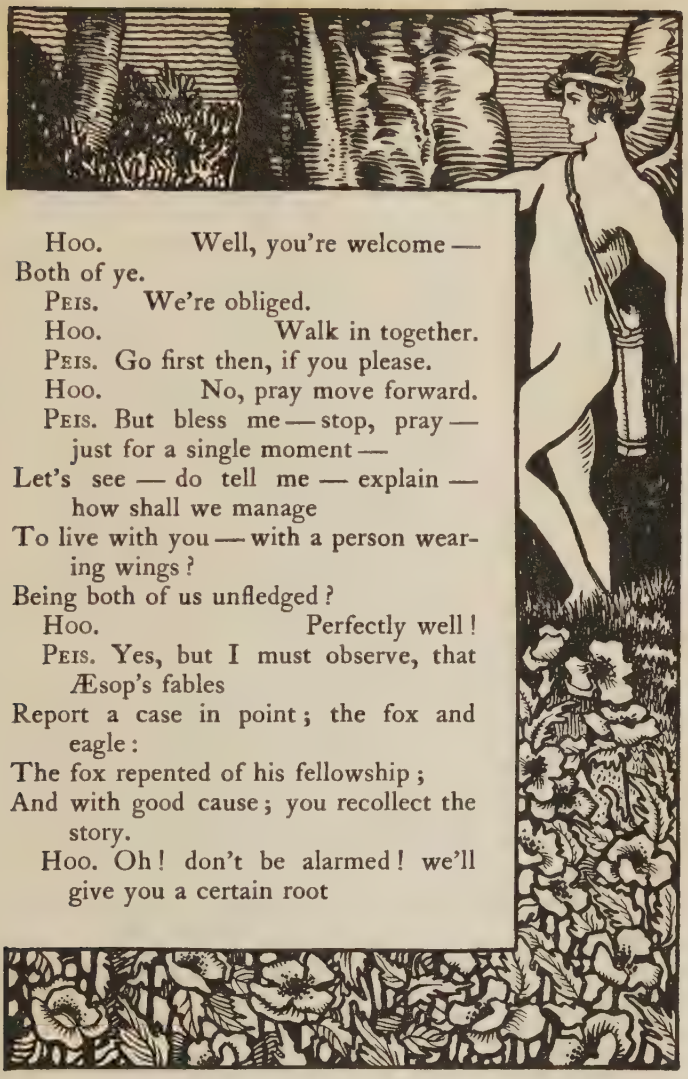
We need not run to foreign lands,
Or Ammon's temple in the sands;
But perform our easy vows,
Among the neighbouring shrubs and boughs;
Paying our oblations fairly,
With a pennyworth of barley.
CHOR. O best of all envoys, suspected before,
Now known and approved, and respected the more;
To you we resign the political lead,
Our worthy director in council and deed.

Elated with your bold design
I swear and vow:
If resolutely you combine
Your views and interest with mine;
In steadfast councils as a trusty friend,
Without deceit, or guile or fraudful end:
They that rule in haughty state,
The gods ere long shall abdicate

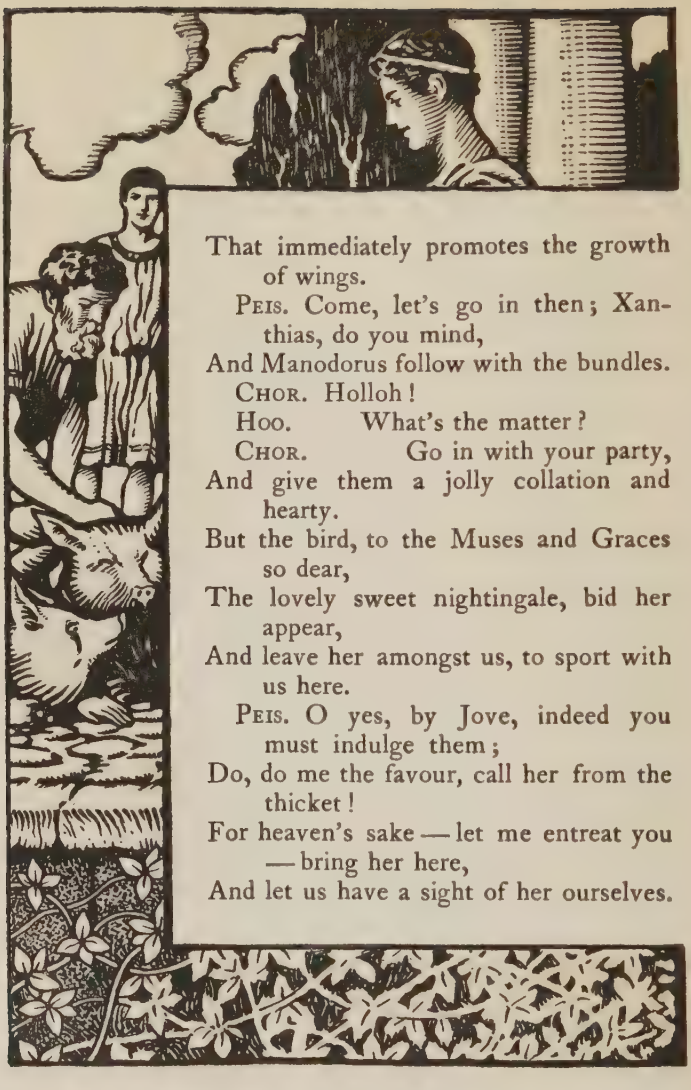


Their high command;
And yield the sceptre to my rightful hand.

Then reckon on us for a number and force;
As on you we rely for a ready resource,
In council and policy, trusting to you,
To direct the design we resolve to pursue.
Hoo. That's well, but we've no time, by Jove, to loiter,
And dawdle and postpone like Nicias.
We should be doing something. First, however,
I must invite you to my roosting place,
This nest of mine, with its poor twigs and leaves.
And tell me what your names are?
Peis. Certainly;
My name is Peisthetairus.
Hoo. And your friend?
Eu. Euelpides from Thria.



Hoo. Well, you're welcome —
Both of ye.
Peis. We're obliged.
Hoo. Walk in together.
Peis. Go first then, if you please.
Hoo. No, pray move forward.
Peis. But bless me — stop, pray —
just for a single moment —
Let's see — do tell me — explain —
how shall we manage
To live with you — with a person wearing wings?
Being both of us unfledged?
Hoo. Perfectly well!
Peis. Yes, but I must observe, that Æsop's fables
Report a case in point; the fox and eagle:
The fox repented of his fellowship;
And with good cause; you recollect the story.
Hoo. Oh! don't be alarmed! we'll give you a certain root



That immediately promotes the growth of wings.

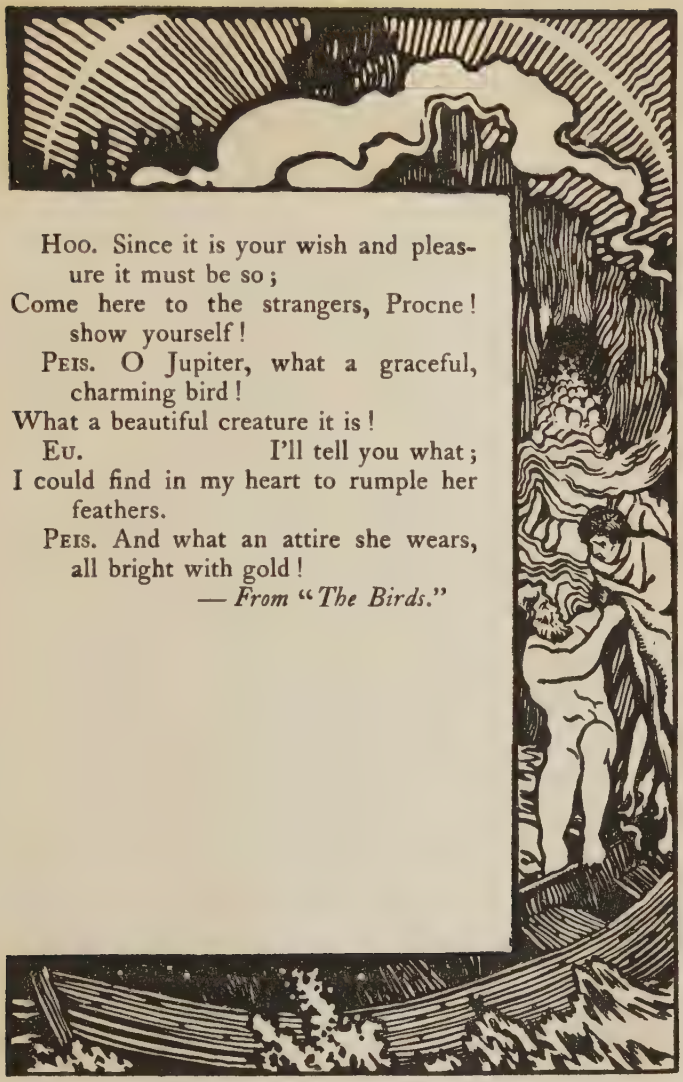
PEIS. Come, let's go in then; Xanthias, do you mind,
And Manodorus follow with the bundles.

CHOR. Holloh!

HOO. What's the matter?

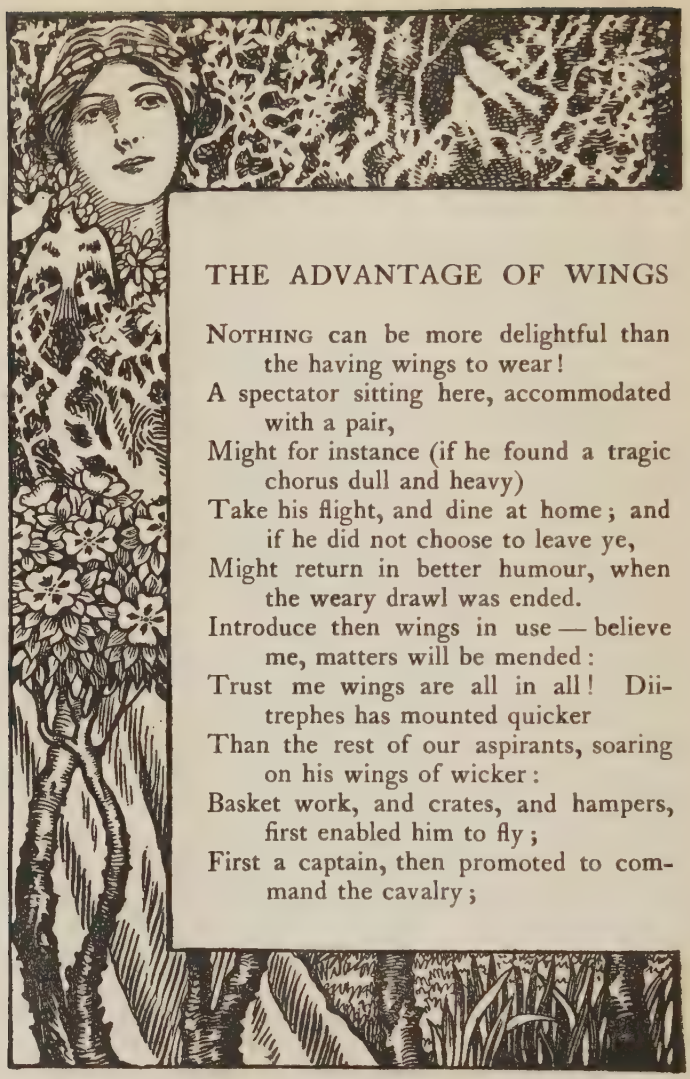
CHOR. Go in with your party,
And give them a jolly collation and hearty.
But the bird, to the Muses and Graces so dear,
The lovely sweet nightingale, bid her appear,
And leave her amongst us, to sport with us here.

PEIS. O yes, by Jove, indeed you must indulge them;
Do, do me the favour, call her from the thicket!
For heaven's sake — let me entreat you — bring her here,
And let us have a sight of her ourselves.



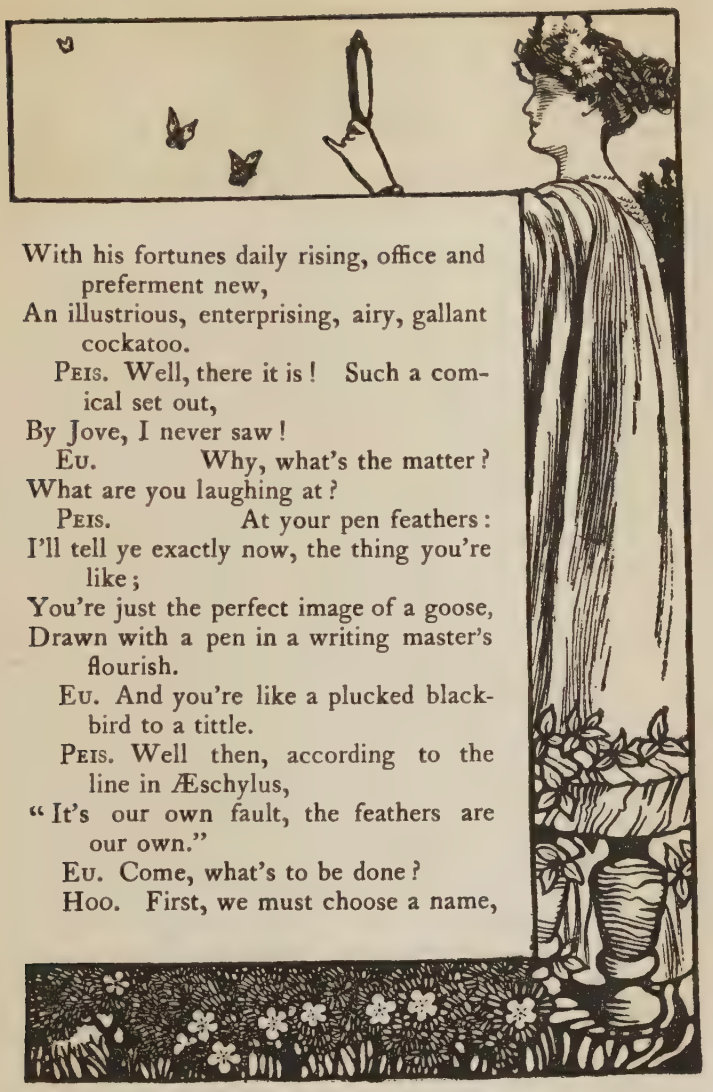
Hoo. Since it is your wish and pleasure it must be so;
Come here to the strangers, Procne! show yourself!
Peis. O Jupiter, what a graceful, charming bird!
What a beautiful creature it is!
Eu. I'll tell you what;
I could find in my heart to rumple her feathers.
Peis. And what an attire she wears, all bright with gold!

— *From "The Birds."*

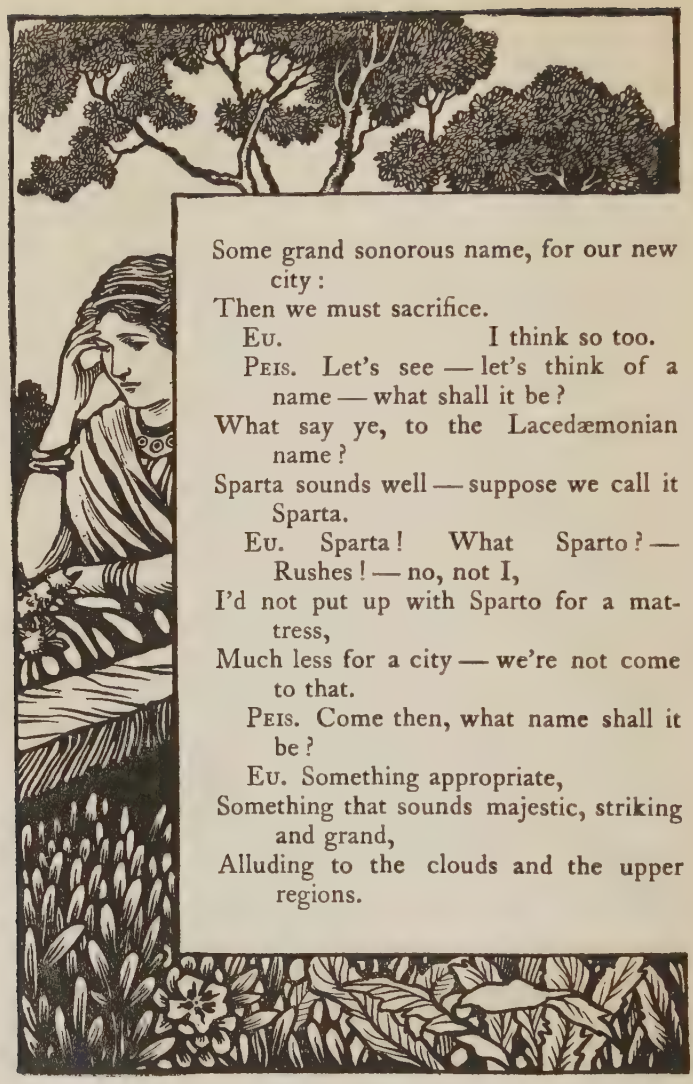


THE ADVANTAGE OF WINGS

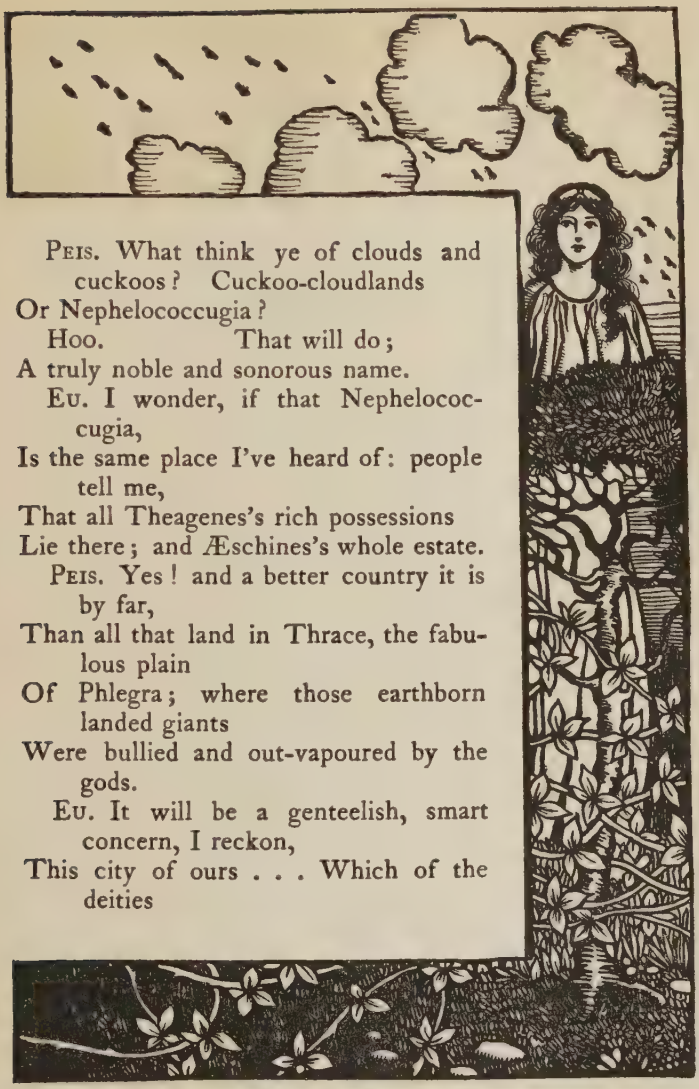
NOTHING can be more delightful than
the having wings to wear!
A spectator sitting here, accommodated
with a pair,
Might for instance (if he found a tragic
chorus dull and heavy)
Take his flight, and dine at home; and
if he did not choose to leave ye,
Might return in better humour, when
the weary drawl was ended.
Introduce then wings in use — believe
me, matters will be mended:
Trust me wings are all in all! Dii-
trephes has mounted quicker
Than the rest of our aspirants, soaring
on his wings of wicker:
Basket work, and crates, and hampers,
first enabled him to fly;
First a captain, then promoted to com-
mand the cavalry;



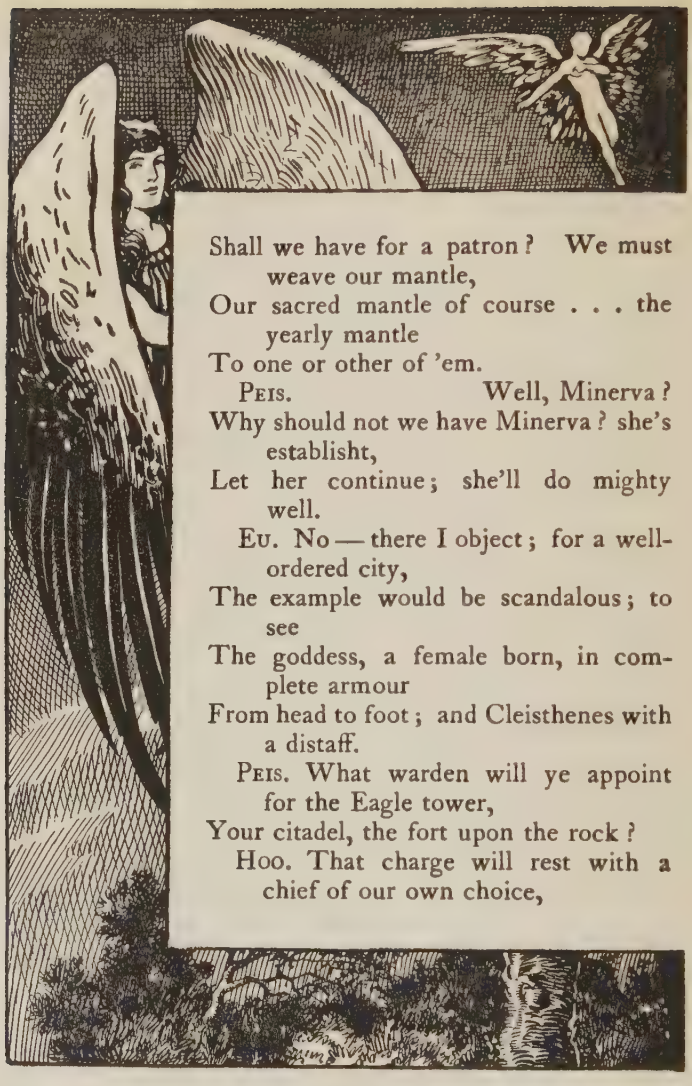
With his fortunes daily rising, office and preferment new,
An illustrious, enterprising, airy, gallant cockatoo.
PEIS. Well, there it is! Such a comical set out,
By Jove, I never saw!
EU. Why, what's the matter?
What are you laughing at?
PEIS. At your pen feathers:
I'll tell ye exactly now, the thing you're like;
You're just the perfect image of a goose,
Drawn with a pen in a writing master's flourish.
EU. And you're like a plucked blackbird to a tittle.
PEIS. Well then, according to the line in Æschylus,
"It's our own fault, the feathers are our own."
EU. Come, what's to be done?
HOO. First, we must choose a name,



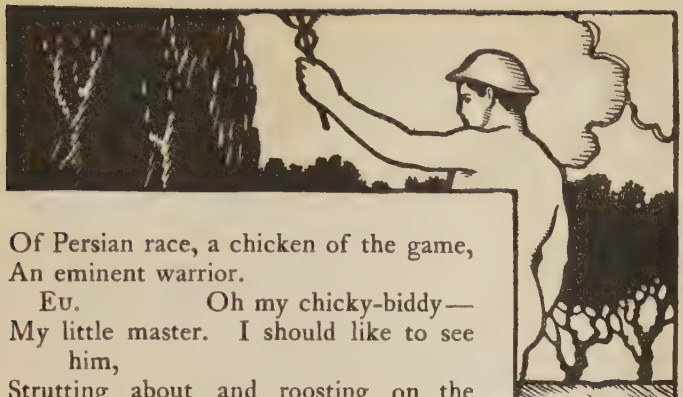
Some grand sonorous name, for our new city:
Then we must sacrifice.
EU. I think so too.
PEIS. Let's see — let's think of a name — what shall it be?
What say ye, to the Lacedæmonian name?
Sparta sounds well — suppose we call it Sparta.
EU. Sparta! What Sparto? — Rushes! — no, not I,
I'd not put up with Sparto for a mattress,
Much less for a city — we're not come to that.
PEIS. Come then, what name shall it be?
EU. Something appropriate,
Something that sounds majestic, striking and grand,
Alluding to the clouds and the upper regions.



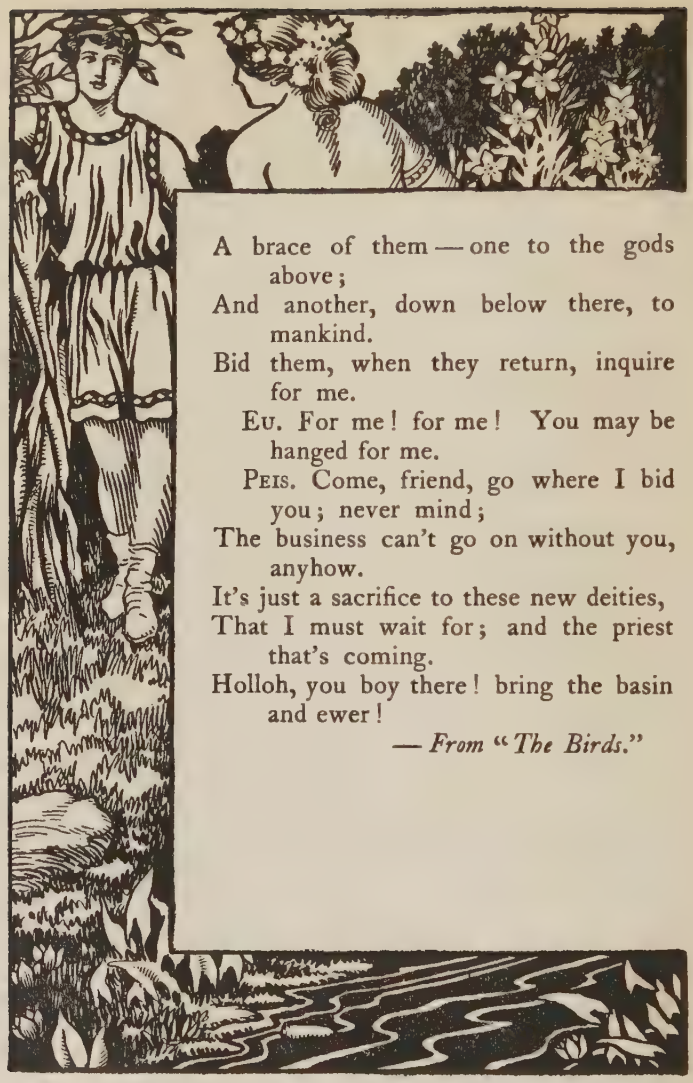
PEIS. What think ye of clouds and cuckoos? Cuckoo-cloudlands
Or Nephelococcugia?
Hoo. That will do;
A truly noble and sonorous name.
EU. I wonder, if that Nephelococcugia,
Is the same place I've heard of: people tell me,
That all Theagenes's rich possessions
Lie there; and Æschines's whole estate.
PEIS. Yes! and a better country it is by far,
Than all that land in Thrace, the fabulous plain
Of Phlegra; where those earthborn landed giants
Were bullied and out-vapoured by the gods.
EU. It will be a genteelish, smart concern, I reckon,
This city of ours . . . Which of the deities



Shall we have for a patron? We must
weave our mantle,
Our sacred mantle of course . . . the
yearly mantle
To one or other of 'em.
PEIS. Well, Minerva?
Why should not we have Minerva? she's
establisht,
Let her continue; she'll do mighty
well.
EU. No — there I object; for a well-
ordered city,
The example would be scandalous; to
see
The goddess, a female born, in com-
plete armour
From head to foot; and Cleisthenes with
a distaff.
PEIS. What warden will ye appoint
for the Eagle tower,
Your citadel, the fort upon the rock?
HOO. That charge will rest with a
chief of our own choice,

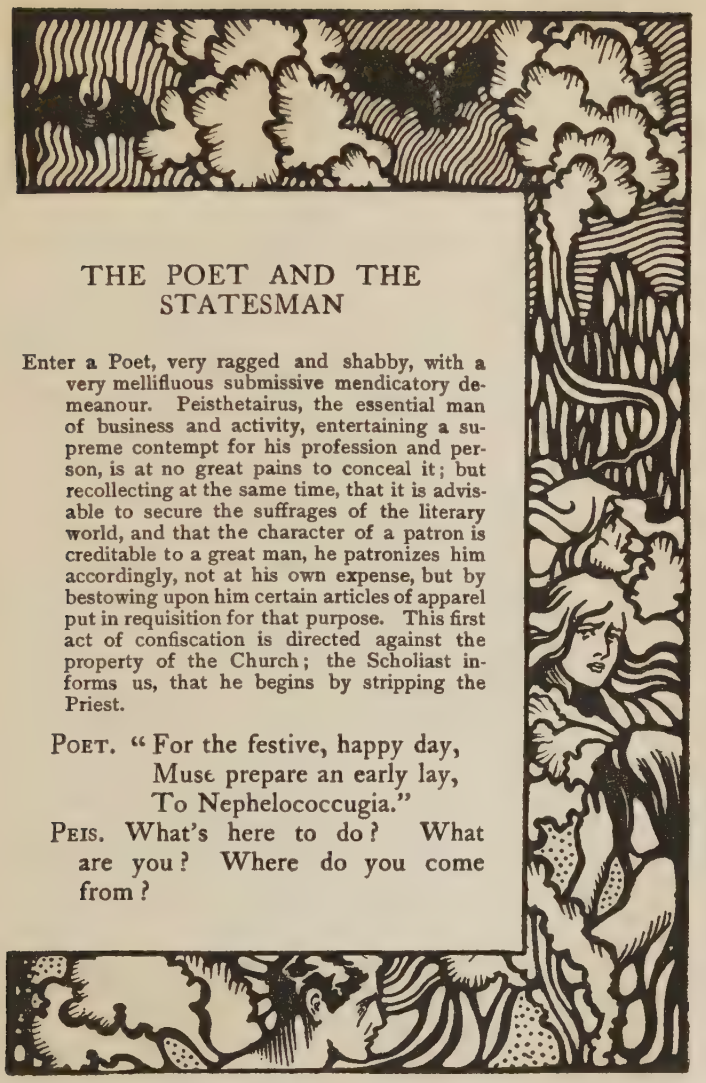


Of Persian race, a chicken of the game,
An eminent warrior.
EU. Oh my chicky-biddy—
My little master. I should like to see him,
Strutting about and roosting on the rock.
PEIS. Come, you now! please to step to the atmosphere;
And give a look to the work, and help the workmen;
And between whiles fetch brick and tiles, and such like;
Draw water, stamp the mortar — do it barefoot;
Climb up the ladders; tumble down again:
Keep constant watch and ward; conceal your watch lights;
Then go the rounds, and give the countersign,
Till you fall fast asleep. Send heralds off,



A brace of them — one to the gods above;
And another, down below there, to mankind.
Bid them, when they return, inquire for me.
EU. For me! for me! You may be hanged for me.
PEIS. Come, friend, go where I bid you; never mind;
The business can't go on without you, anyhow.
It's just a sacrifice to these new deities,
That I must wait for; and the priest that's coming.
Holloh, you boy there! bring the basin and ewer!

— *From "The Birds."*

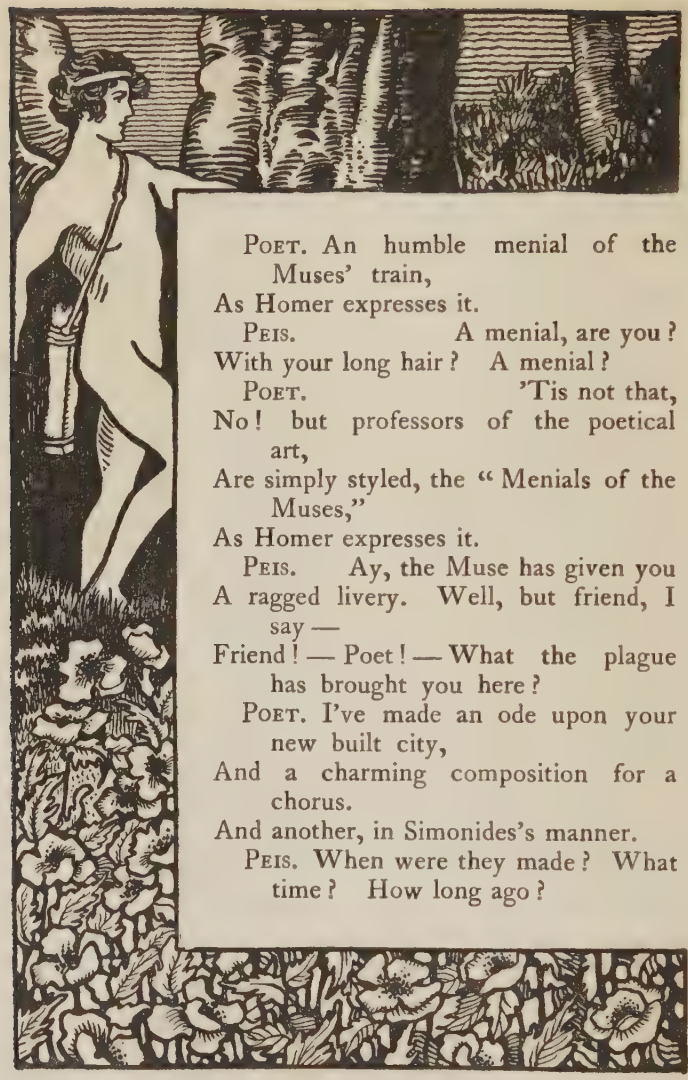


THE POET AND THE STATESMAN

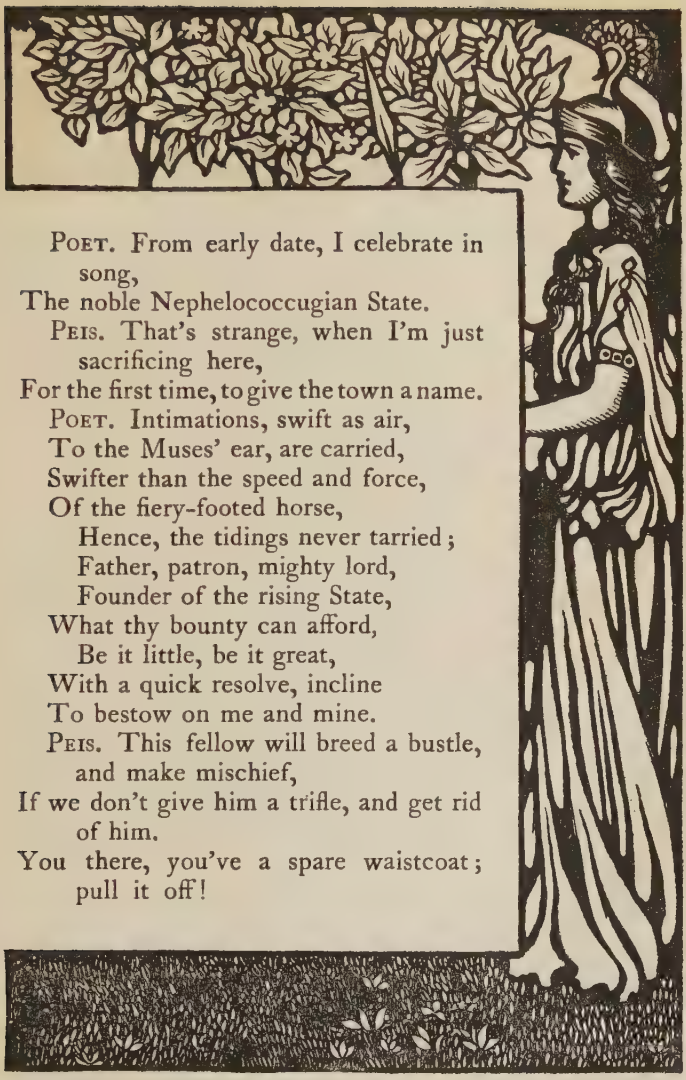
Enter a Poet, very ragged and shabby, with a very mellifluous submissive mendicatory demeanour. Peisthetairus, the essential man of business and activity, entertaining a supreme contempt for his profession and person, is at no great pains to conceal it; but recollecting at the same time, that it is advisable to secure the suffrages of the literary world, and that the character of a patron is creditable to a great man, he patronizes him accordingly, not at his own expense, but by bestowing upon him certain articles of apparel put in requisition for that purpose. This first act of confiscation is directed against the property of the Church; the Scholiast informs us, that he begins by stripping the Priest.

POET. "For the festive, happy day,
Muse prepare an early lay,
To Nephelococcugia."

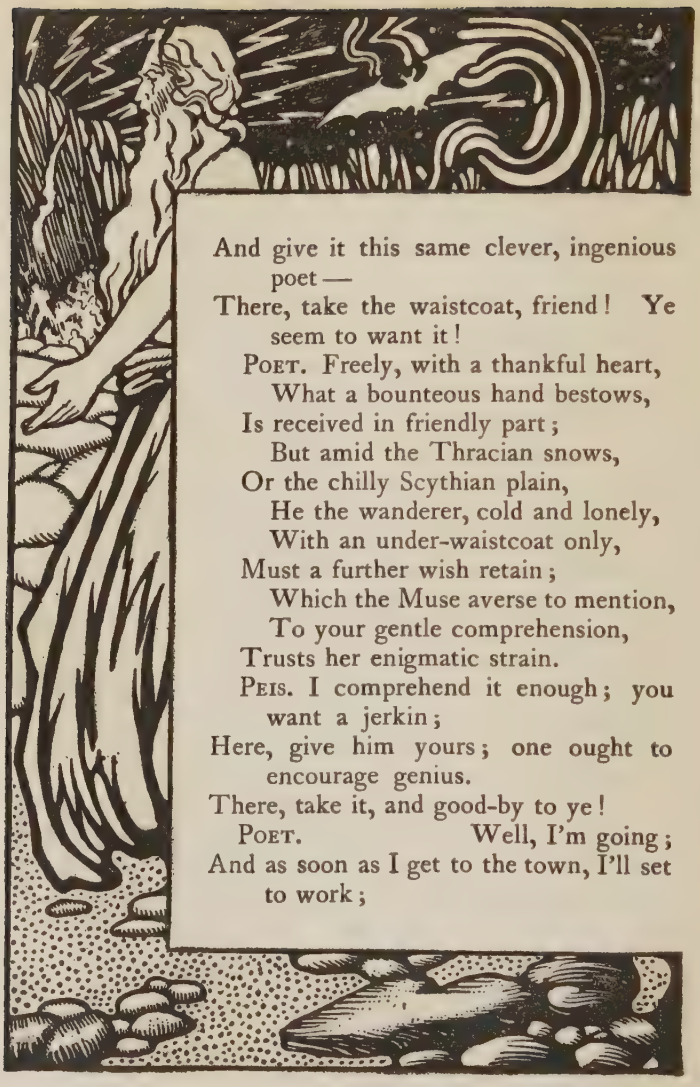
PEIS. What's here to do? What are you? Where do you come from?



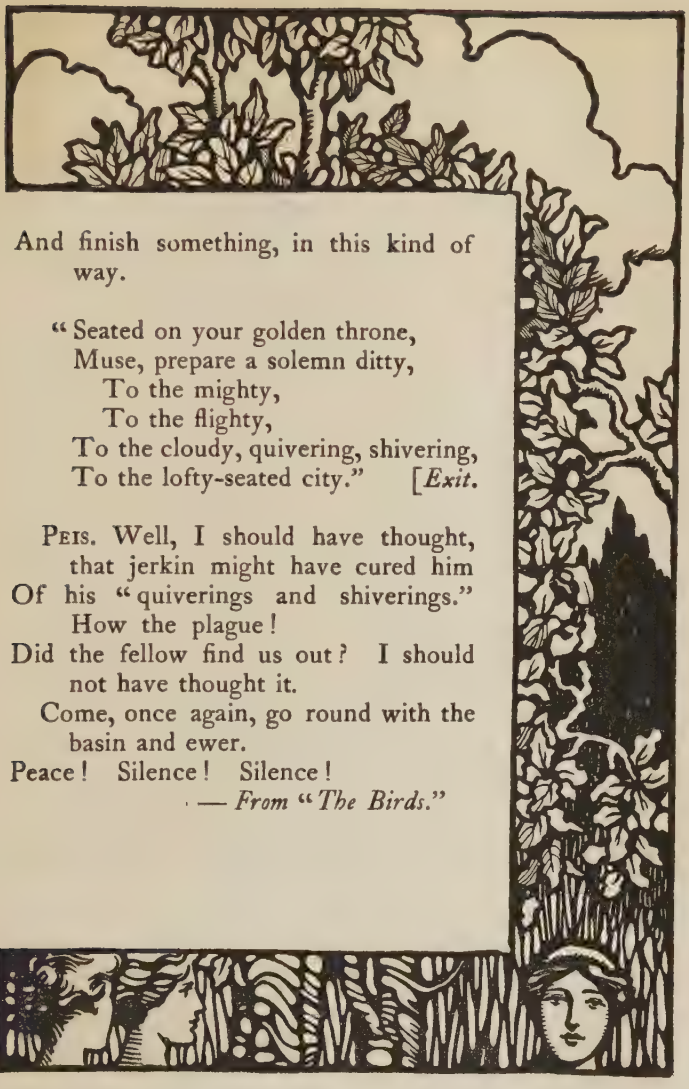
Poet. An humble menial of the Muses' train,
As Homer expresses it.
Peis. A menial, are you?
With your long hair? A menial?
Poet. 'Tis not that,
No! but professors of the poetical art,
Are simply styled, the "Menials of the Muses,"
As Homer expresses it.
Peis. Ay, the Muse has given you
A ragged livery. Well, but friend, I say —
Friend! — Poet! — What the plague has brought you here?
Poet. I've made an ode upon your new built city,
And a charming composition for a chorus.
And another, in Simonides's manner.
Peis. When were they made? What time? How long ago?



Poet. From early date, I celebrate in song,
The noble Nephelococcugian State.
Peis. That's strange, when I'm just sacrificing here,
For the first time, to give the town a name.
Poet. Intimations, swift as air,
To the Muses' ear, are carried,
Swifter than the speed and force,
Of the fiery-footed horse,
Hence, the tidings never tarried;
Father, patron, mighty lord,
Founder of the rising State,
What thy bounty can afford,
Be it little, be it great,
With a quick resolve, incline
To bestow on me and mine.
Peis. This fellow will breed a bustle, and make mischief,
If we don't give him a trifle, and get rid of him.
You there, you've a spare waistcoat; pull it off!



And give it this same clever, ingenious poet —
There, take the waistcoat, friend! Ye seem to want it!
POET. Freely, with a thankful heart,
What a bounteous hand bestows,
Is received in friendly part;
But amid the Thracian snows,
Or the chilly Scythian plain,
He the wanderer, cold and lonely,
With an under-waistcoat only,
Must a further wish retain;
Which the Muse averse to mention,
To your gentle comprehension,
Trusts her enigmatic strain.
PEIS. I comprehend it enough; you want a jerkin;
Here, give him yours; one ought to encourage genius.
There, take it, and good-by to ye!
POET. Well, I'm going;
And as soon as I get to the town, I'll set to work;

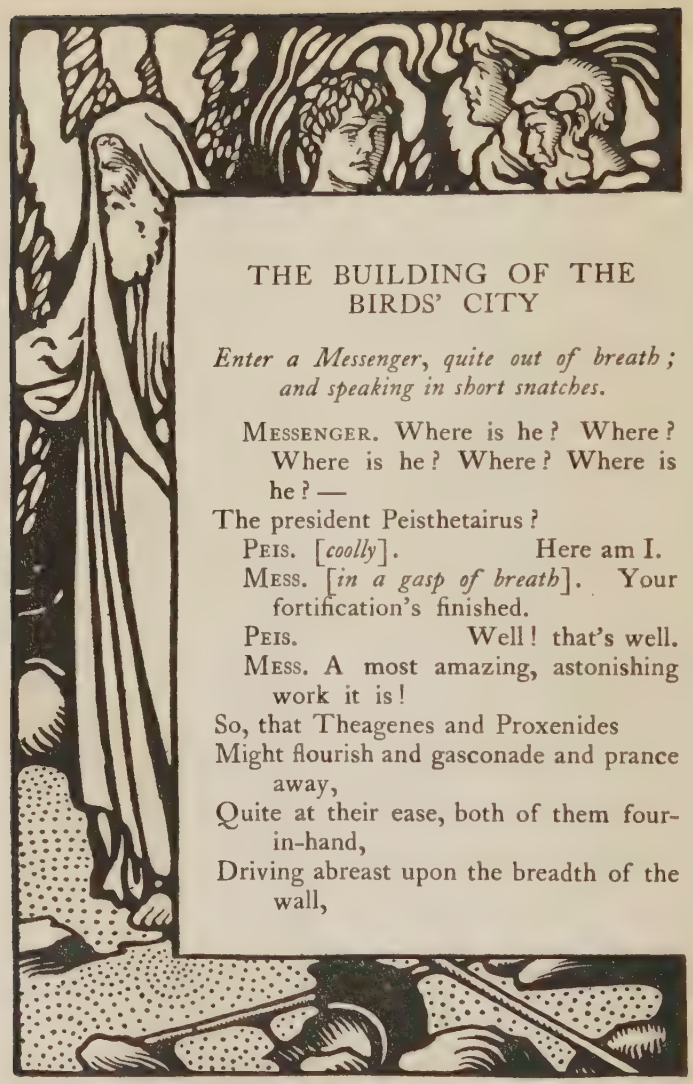


And finish something, in this kind of way.

"Seated on your golden throne,
Muse, prepare a solemn ditty,
To the mighty,
To the flighty,
To the cloudy, quivering, shivering,
To the lofty-seated city." [*Exit.*

Peis. Well, I should have thought, that jerkin might have cured him
Of his "quiverings and shiverings." How the plague!
Did the fellow find us out? I should not have thought it.
Come, once again, go round with the basin and ewer.
Peace! Silence! Silence!

— *From "The Birds."*



THE BUILDING OF THE BIRDS' CITY

Enter a Messenger, quite out of breath; and speaking in short snatches.

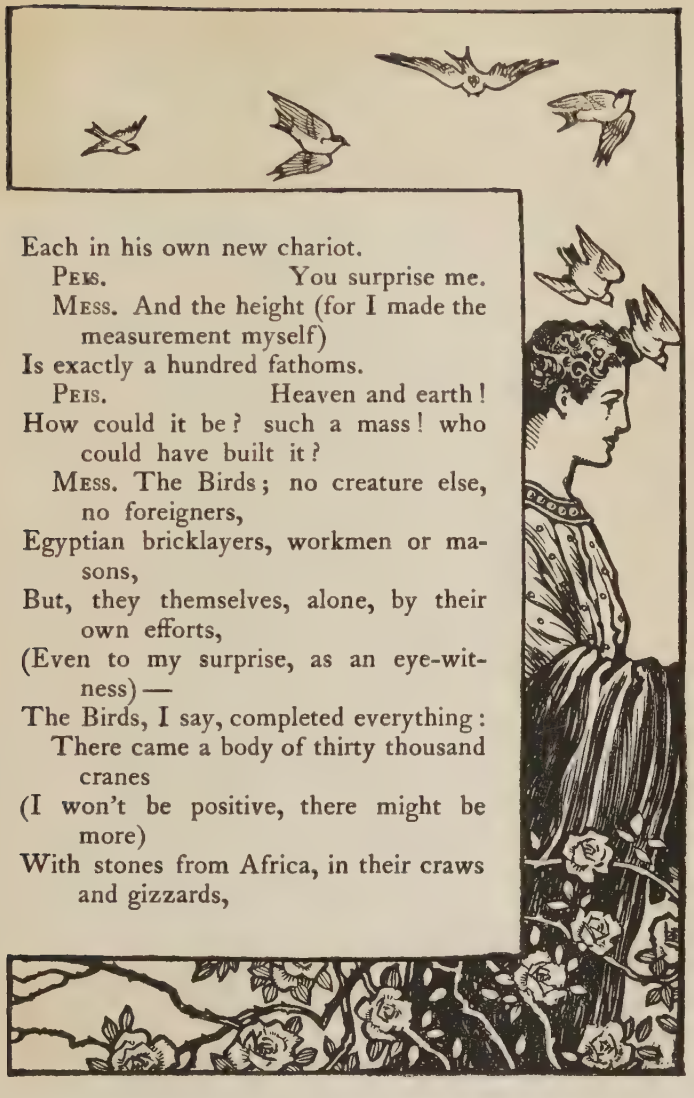
MESSENGER. Where is he? Where? Where is he? Where? Where is he? —
The president Peisthetairus?

PEIS. [*coolly*]. Here am I.

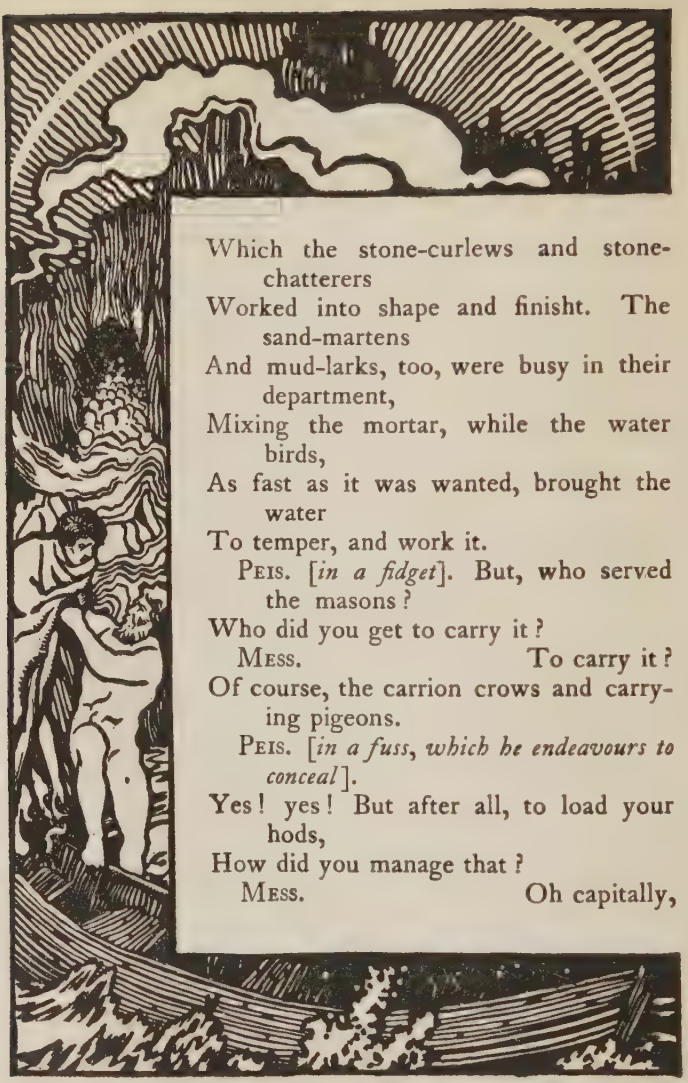
MESS. [*in a gasp of breath*]. Your fortification's finished.

PEIS. Well! that's well.

MESS. A most amazing, astonishing work it is!
So, that Theagenes and Proxenides
Might flourish and gasconade and prance away,
Quite at their ease, both of them four-in-hand,
Driving abreast upon the breadth of the wall,



Each in his own new chariot.
PEIS. You surprise me.
MESS. And the height (for I made the measurement myself)
Is exactly a hundred fathoms.
PEIS. Heaven and earth!
How could it be? such a mass! who could have built it?
MESS. The Birds; no creature else, no foreigners,
Egyptian bricklayers, workmen or masons,
But, they themselves, alone, by their own efforts,
(Even to my surprise, as an eye-witness) —
The Birds, I say, completed everything:
There came a body of thirty thousand cranes
(I won't be positive, there might be more)
With stones from Africa, in their craws and gizzards,



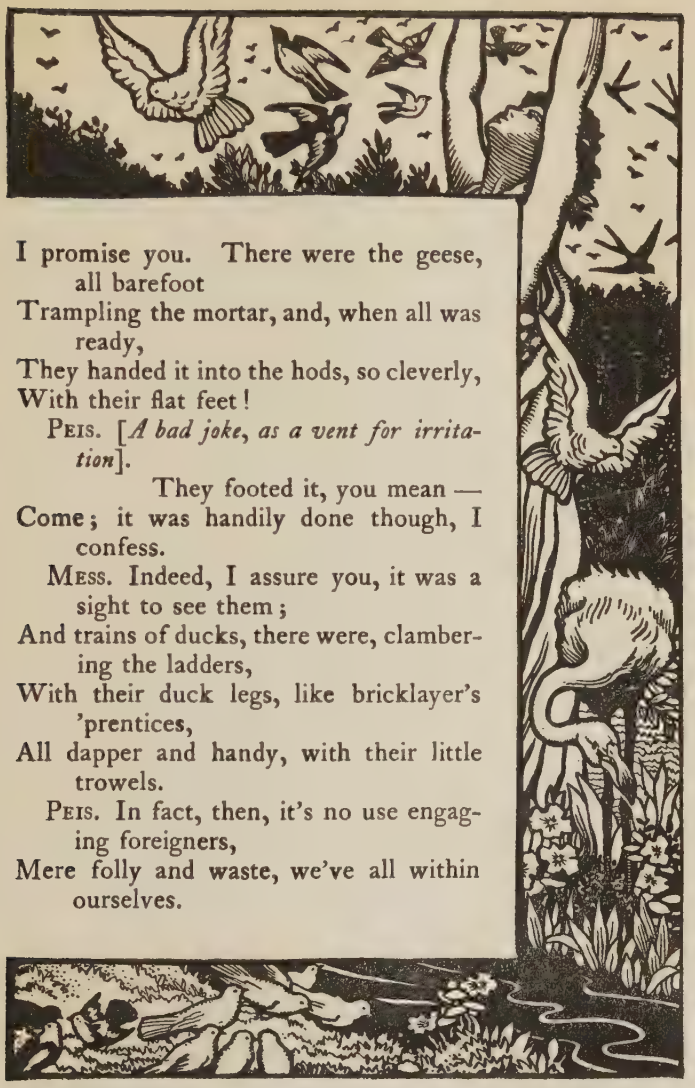
Which the stone-curlews and stone-chatterers
Worked into shape and finisht. The sand-martens
And mud-larks, too, were busy in their department,
Mixing the mortar, while the water birds,
As fast as it was wanted, brought the water
To temper, and work it.

PEIS. [*in a fidget*]. But, who served the masons?
Who did you get to carry it?

MESS. To carry it?
Of course, the carrion crows and carrying pigeons.

PEIS. [*in a fuss, which he endeavours to conceal*].
Yes! yes! But after all, to load your hods,
How did you manage that?

MESS. Oh capitally,



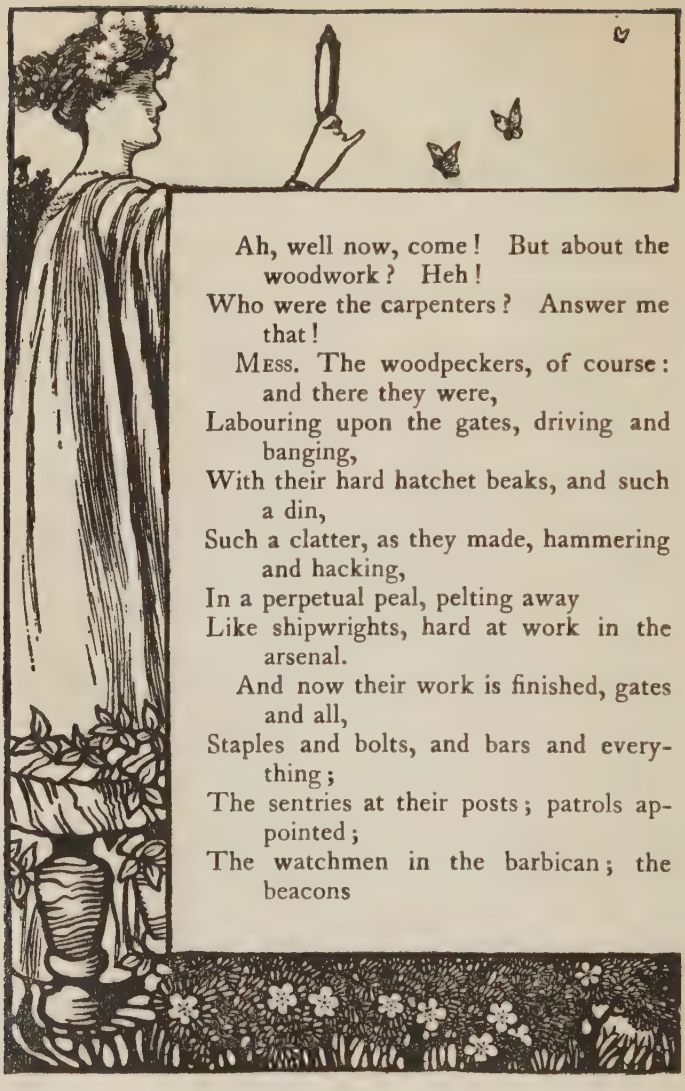
I promise you. There were the geese, all barefoot
Trampling the mortar, and, when all was ready,
They handed it into the hods, so cleverly,
With their flat feet!

PEIS. [*A bad joke, as a vent for irritation*].

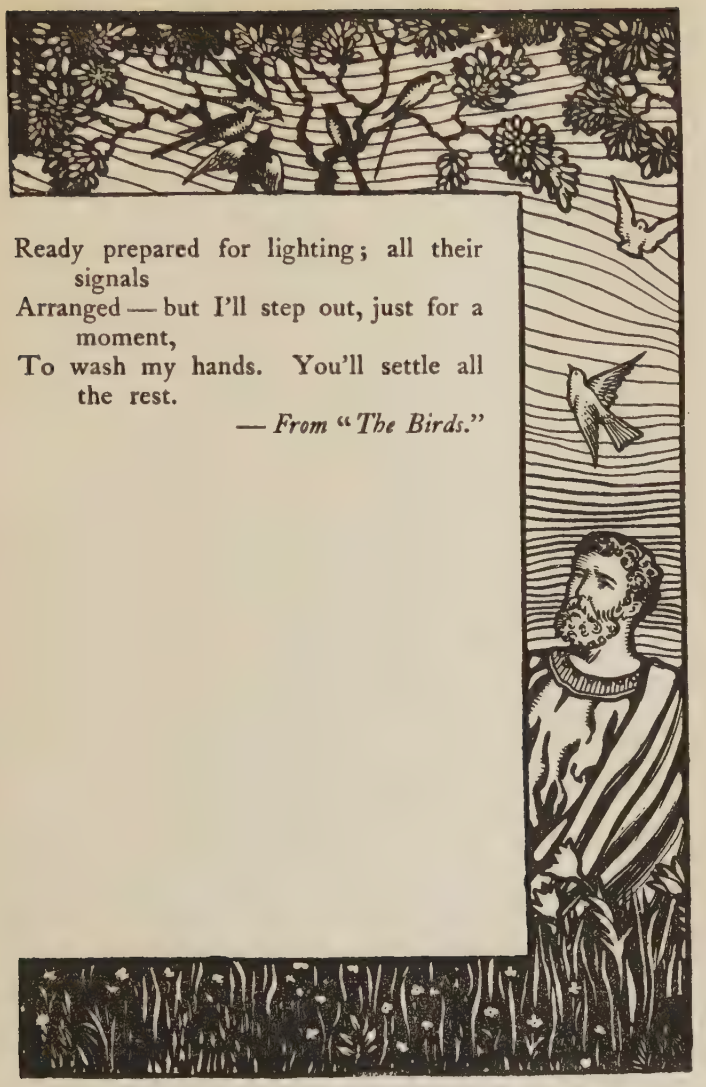
They footed it, you mean —
Come; it was handily done though, I confess.

MESS. Indeed, I assure you, it was a sight to see them;
And trains of ducks, there were, clambering the ladders,
With their duck legs, like bricklayer's 'prentices,
All dapper and handy, with their little trowels.

PEIS. In fact, then, it's no use engaging foreigners,
Mere folly and waste, we've all within ourselves.

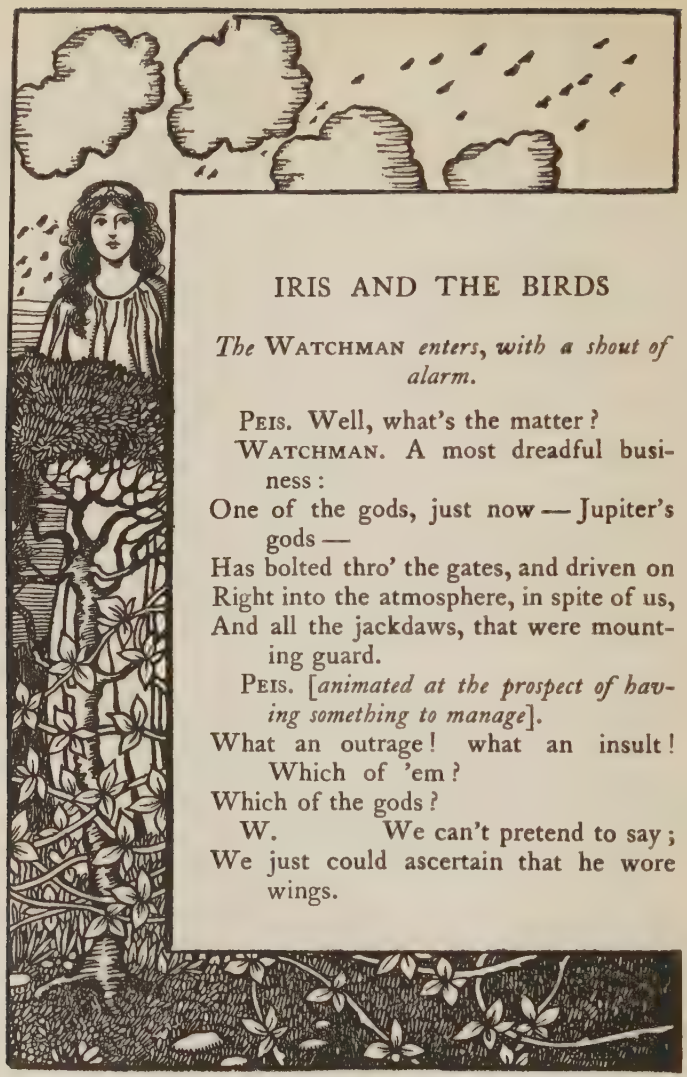


Ah, well now, come! But about the woodwork? Heh!
Who were the carpenters? Answer me that!
MESS. The woodpeckers, of course: and there they were,
Labouring upon the gates, driving and banging,
With their hard hatchet beaks, and such a din,
Such a clatter, as they made, hammering and hacking,
In a perpetual peal, pelting away
Like shipwrights, hard at work in the arsenal.
And now their work is finished, gates and all,
Staples and bolts, and bars and everything;
The sentries at their posts; patrols appointed;
The watchmen in the barbican; the beacons



Ready prepared for lighting; all their
signals
Arranged — but I'll step out, just for a
moment,
To wash my hands. You'll settle all
the rest.

— *From "The Birds."*



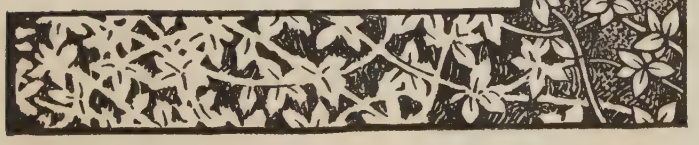
IRIS AND THE BIRDS

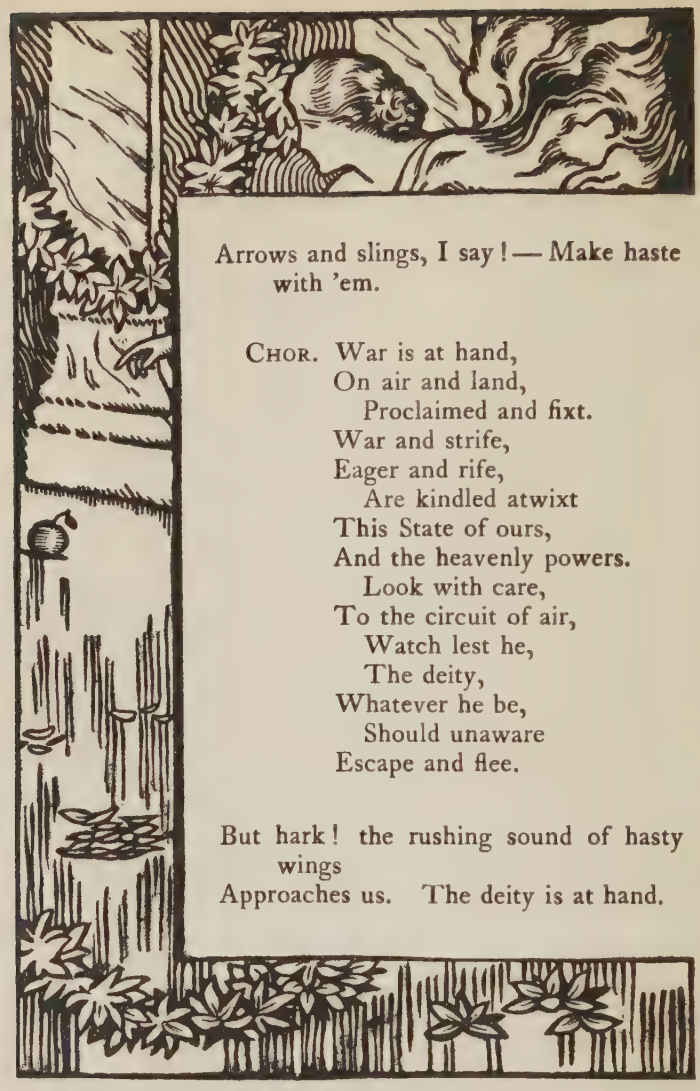
The WATCHMAN *enters, with a shout of alarm.*

PEIS. Well, what's the matter?
WATCHMAN. A most dreadful business:
One of the gods, just now — Jupiter's gods —
Has bolted thro' the gates, and driven on
Right into the atmosphere, in spite of us,
And all the jackdaws, that were mounting guard.
PEIS. [*animated at the prospect of having something to manage*].
What an outrage! what an insult!
Which of 'em?
Which of the gods?
W. We can't pretend to say;
We just could ascertain that he wore wings.



We're clear upon that point.
PEIS. But a light party
Ought surely to have been sent in such a case;
A detachment —
W. A detachment has been sent
Already: a squadron of ten thousand hawks,
Besides a corps of twenty thousand hobby hawks,
As a light cavalry, to scour the country:
Vultures and falcons, ospreys, eagles, all
Have sallied forth; the sound of wings is heard,
Rushing and whizzing round on every side,
In eager search. The fugitive divinity
Is not far off, and soon must be discovered.
PEIS. Did nobody think of slingers? Where are they?
Where are the slingers got to? Give me a sling.

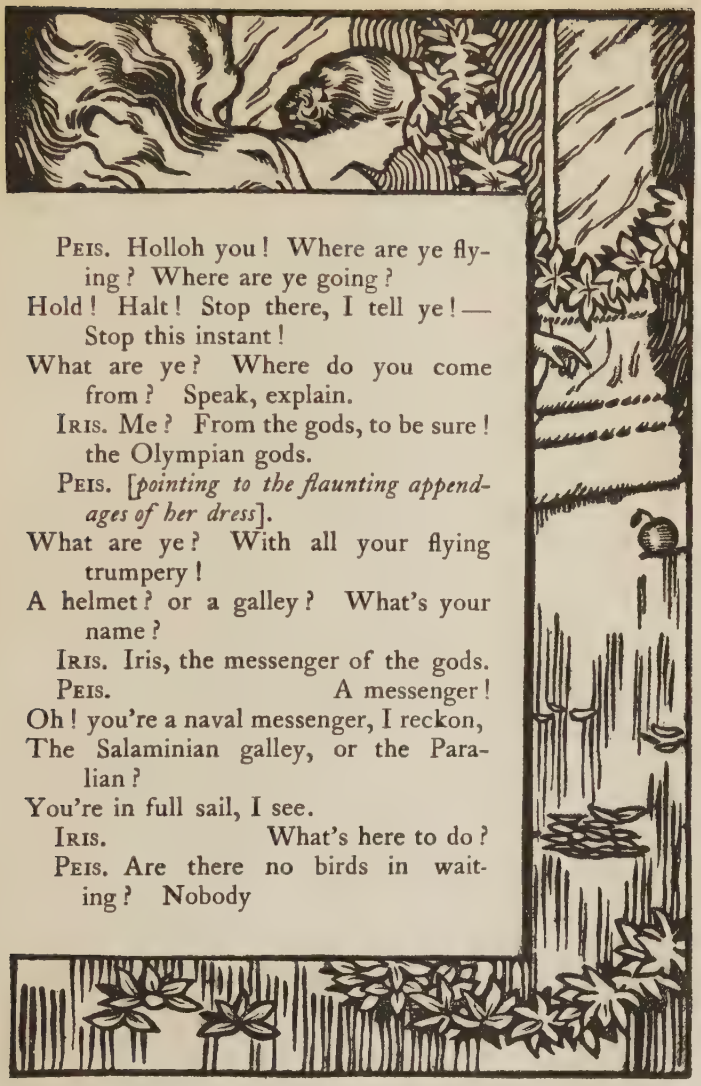




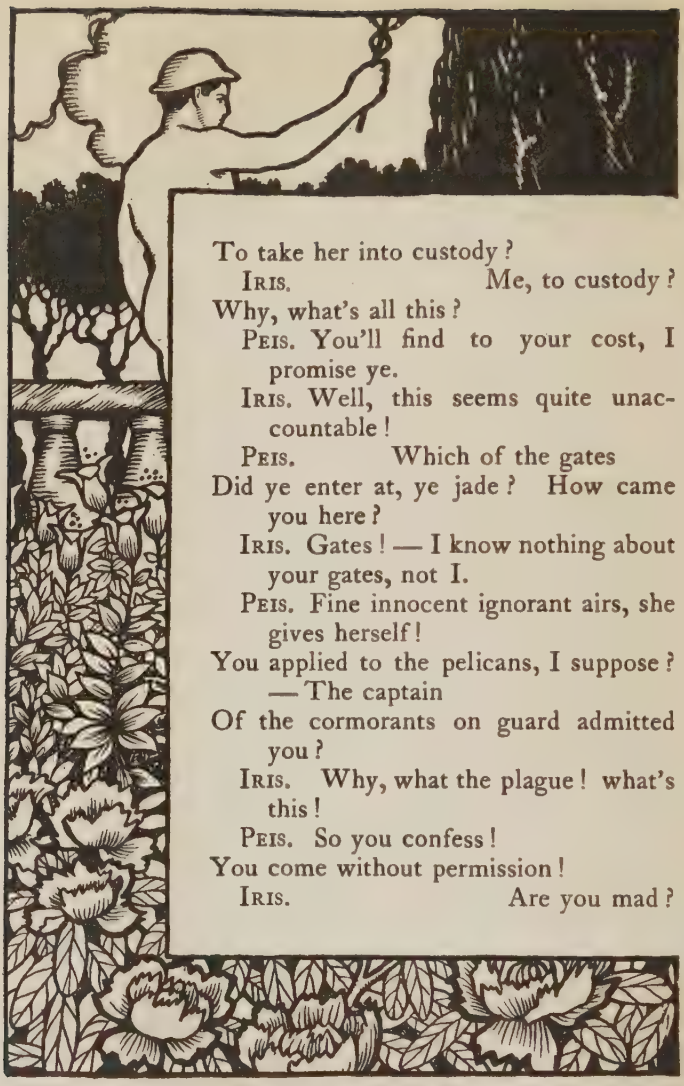
Arrows and slings, I say! — Make haste with 'em.

CHOR. War is at hand,
On air and land,
Proclaimed and fixt.
War and strife,
Eager and rife,
Are kindled atwixt
This State of ours,
And the heavenly powers.
Look with care,
To the circuit of air,
Watch lest he,
The deity,
Whatever he be,
Should unaware
Escape and flee.

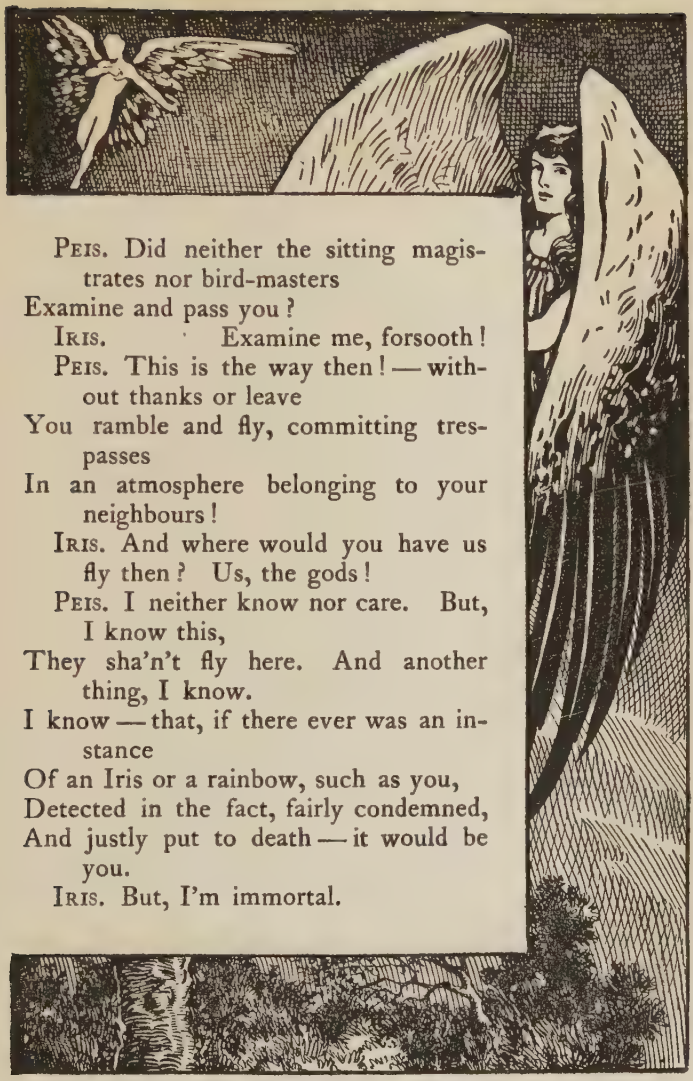
But hark! the rushing sound of hasty wings
Approaches us. The deity is at hand.



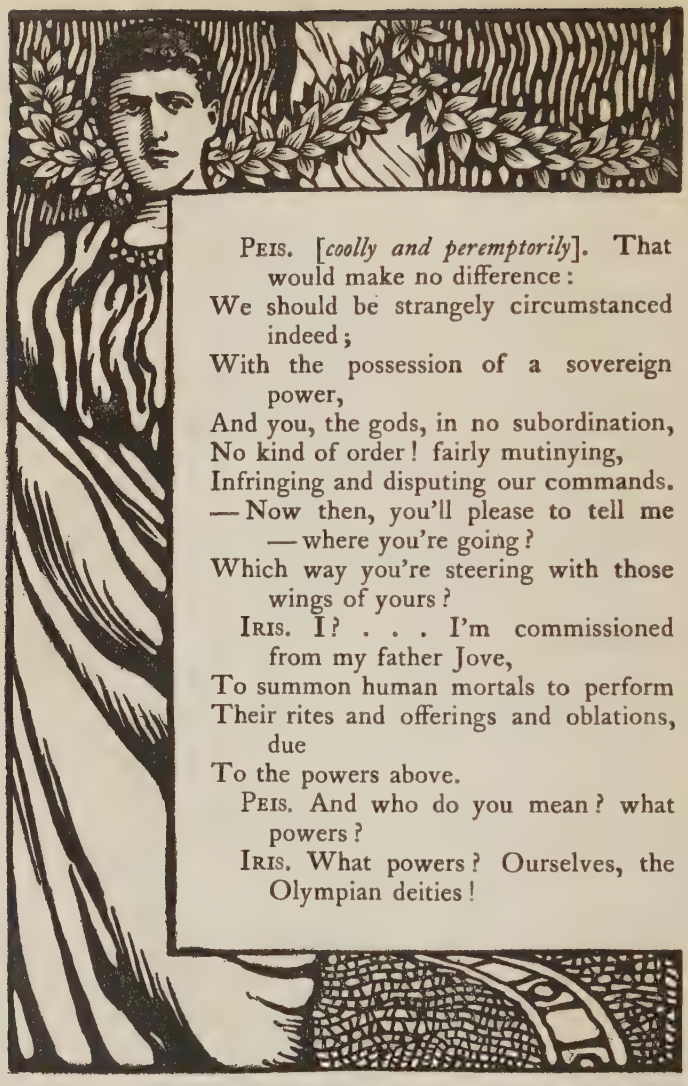
PEIS. Holloh you! Where are ye flying? Where are ye going?
Hold! Halt! Stop there, I tell ye!—
Stop this instant!
What are ye? Where do you come from? Speak, explain.
IRIS. Me? From the gods, to be sure! the Olympian gods.
PEIS. [*pointing to the flaunting appendages of her dress*].
What are ye? With all your flying trumpery!
A helmet? or a galley? What's your name?
IRIS. Iris, the messenger of the gods.
PEIS. A messenger!
Oh! you're a naval messenger, I reckon,
The Salaminian galley, or the Paralian?
You're in full sail, I see.
IRIS. What's here to do?
PEIS. Are there no birds in waiting? Nobody



To take her into custody?
IRIS. Me, to custody?
Why, what's all this?
PEIS. You'll find to your cost, I promise ye.
IRIS. Well, this seems quite unaccountable!
PEIS. Which of the gates
Did ye enter at, ye jade? How came you here?
IRIS. Gates! — I know nothing about your gates, not I.
PEIS. Fine innocent ignorant airs, she gives herself!
You applied to the pelicans, I suppose? — The captain
Of the cormorants on guard admitted you?
IRIS. Why, what the plague! what's this!
PEIS. So you confess!
You come without permission!
IRIS. Are you mad?



PEIS. Did neither the sitting magistrates nor bird-masters
Examine and pass you?
IRIS. Examine me, forsooth!
PEIS. This is the way then! — without thanks or leave
You ramble and fly, committing trespasses
In an atmosphere belonging to your neighbours!
IRIS. And where would you have us fly then? Us, the gods!
PEIS. I neither know nor care. But, I know this,
They sha'n't fly here. And another thing, I know.
I know — that, if there ever was an instance
Of an Iris or a rainbow, such as you,
Detected in the fact, fairly condemned,
And justly put to death — it would be you.
IRIS. But, I'm immortal.

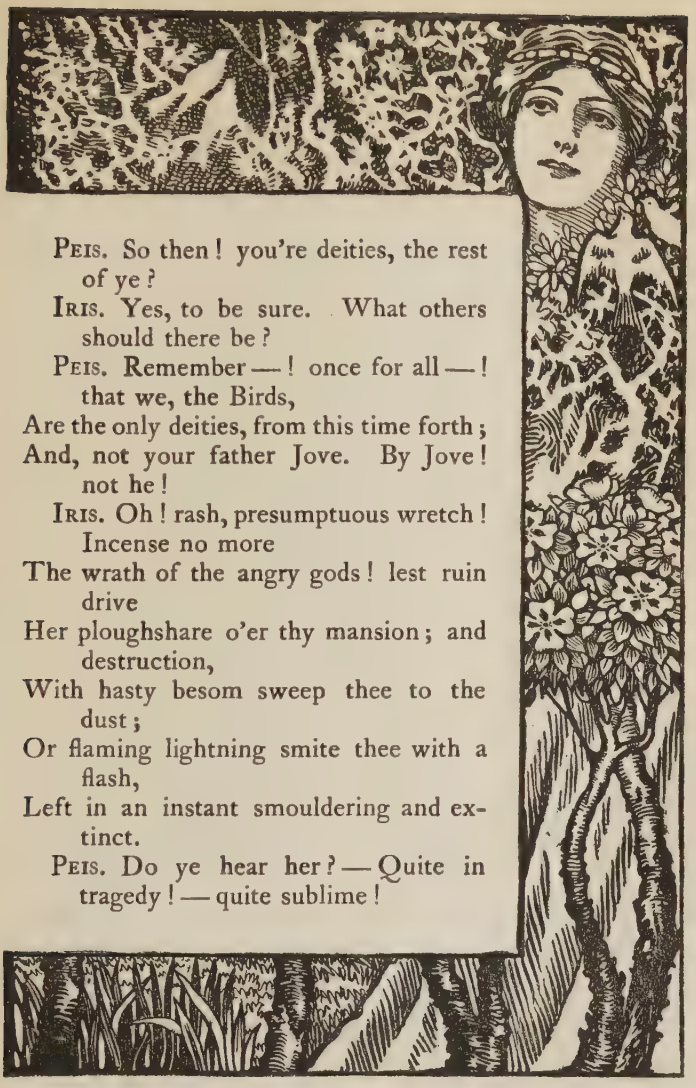


PEIS. [*coolly and peremptorily*]. That would make no difference:
We should be strangely circumstanced indeed;
With the possession of a sovereign power,
And you, the gods, in no subordination,
No kind of order! fairly mutinying,
Infringing and disputing our commands.
— Now then, you'll please to tell me — where you're going?
Which way you're steering with those wings of yours?

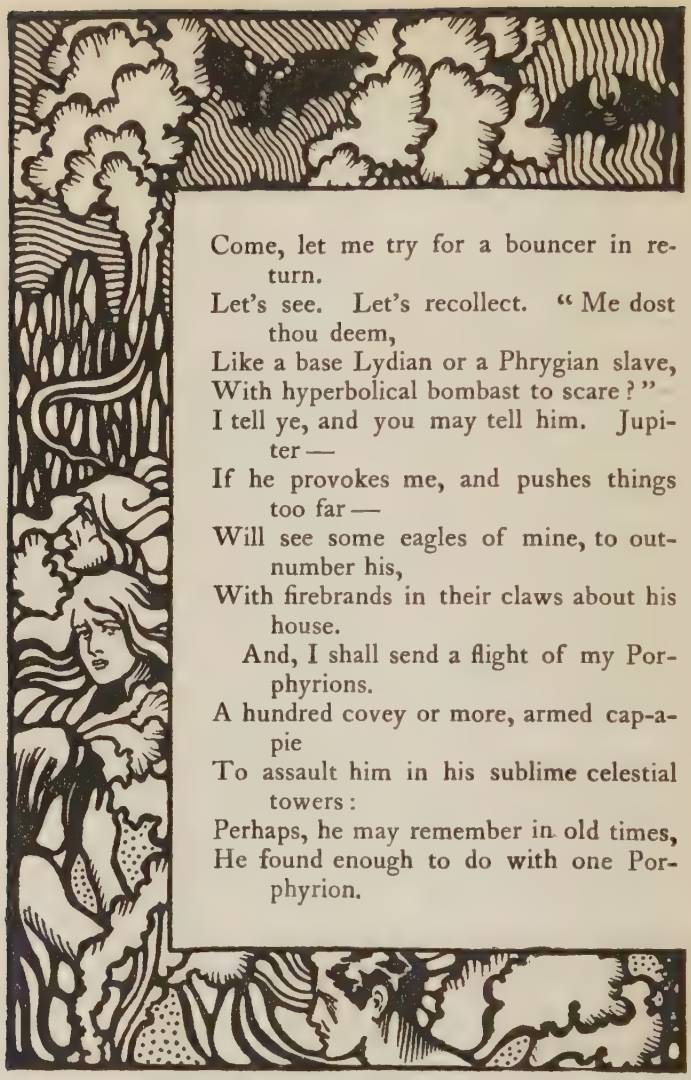
IRIS. I? . . . I'm commissioned from my father Jove,
To summon human mortals to perform
Their rites and offerings and oblations, due
To the powers above.

PEIS. And who do you mean? what powers?

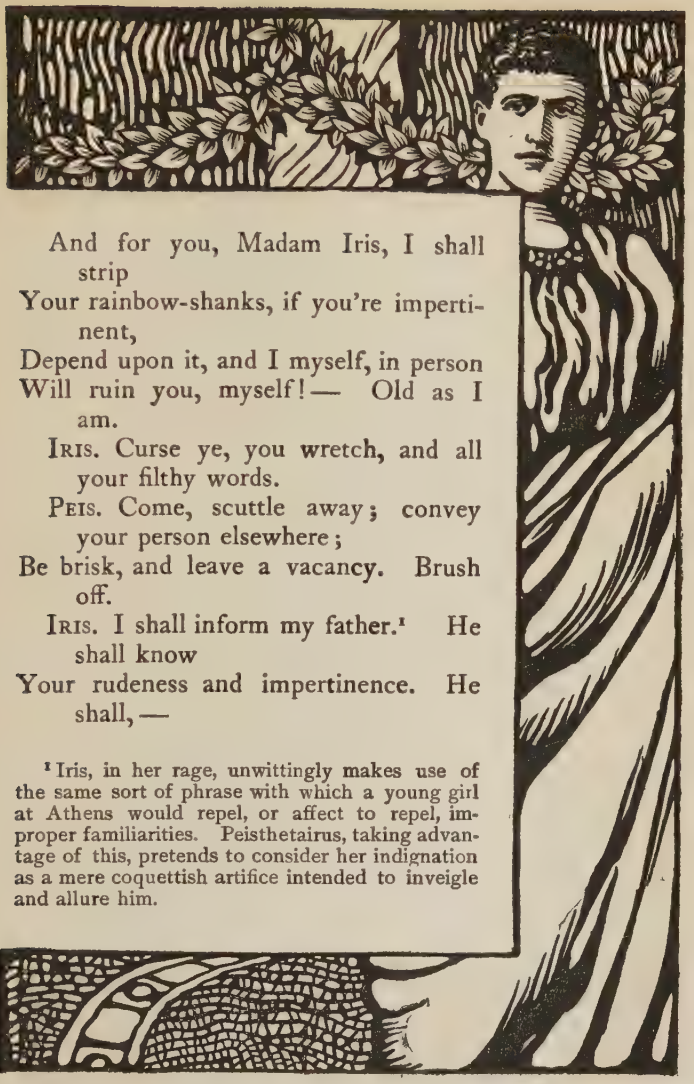
IRIS. What powers? Ourselves, the Olympian deities!



PEIS. So then! you're deities, the rest of ye?
IRIS. Yes, to be sure. What others should there be?
PEIS. Remember—! once for all—! that we, the Birds,
Are the only deities, from this time forth;
And, not your father Jove. By Jove! not he!
IRIS. Oh! rash, presumptuous wretch! Incense no more
The wrath of the angry gods! lest ruin drive
Her ploughshare o'er thy mansion; and destruction,
With hasty besom sweep thee to the dust;
Or flaming lightning smite thee with a flash,
Left in an instant smouldering and extinct.
PEIS. Do ye hear her?—Quite in tragedy!—quite sublime!



Come, let me try for a bouncer in return.
Let's see. Let's recollect. "Me dost thou deem,
Like a base Lydian or a Phrygian slave,
With hyperbolical bombast to scare?"
I tell ye, and you may tell him. Jupiter —
If he provokes me, and pushes things too far —
Will see some eagles of mine, to outnumber his,
With firebrands in their claws about his house.
And, I shall send a flight of my Porphyrions.
A hundred covey or more, armed cap-a-pie
To assault him in his sublime celestial towers:
Perhaps, he may remember in old times,
He found enough to do with one Porphyrion.



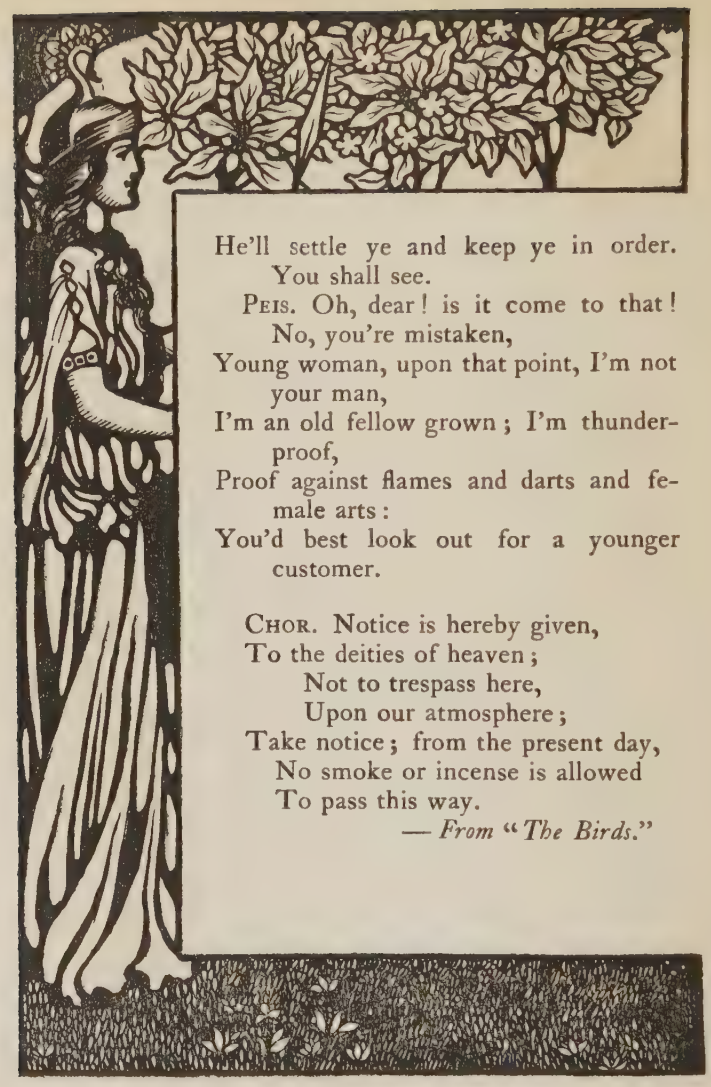
And for you, Madam Iris, I shall strip
Your rainbow-shanks, if you're impertinent,
Depend upon it, and I myself, in person
Will ruin you, myself! — Old as I am.

IRIS. Curse ye, you wretch, and all your filthy words.

PEIS. Come, scuttle away; convey your person elsewhere;
Be brisk, and leave a vacancy. Brush off.

IRIS. I shall inform my father.[1] He shall know
Your rudeness and impertinence. He shall, —

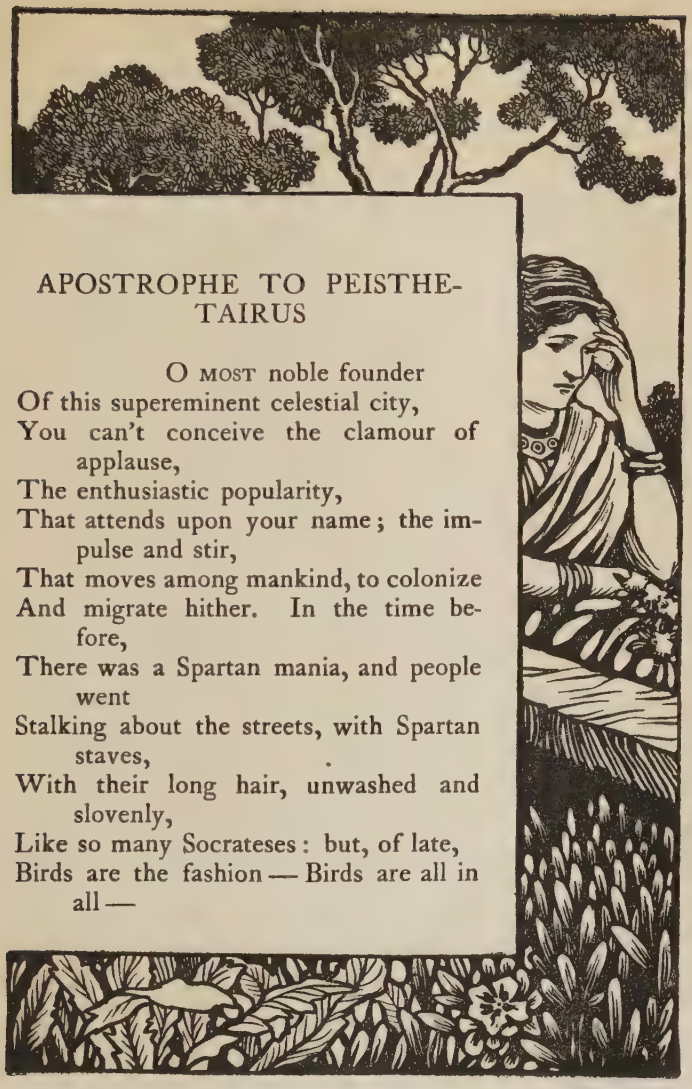
[1] Iris, in her rage, unwittingly makes use of the same sort of phrase with which a young girl at Athens would repel, or affect to repel, improper familiarities. Peisthetairus, taking advantage of this, pretends to consider her indignation as a mere coquettish artifice intended to inveigle and allure him.



He'll settle ye and keep ye in order.
You shall see.
PEIS. Oh, dear! is it come to that!
No, you're mistaken,
Young woman, upon that point, I'm not your man,
I'm an old fellow grown; I'm thunder-proof,
Proof against flames and darts and female arts:
You'd best look out for a younger customer.

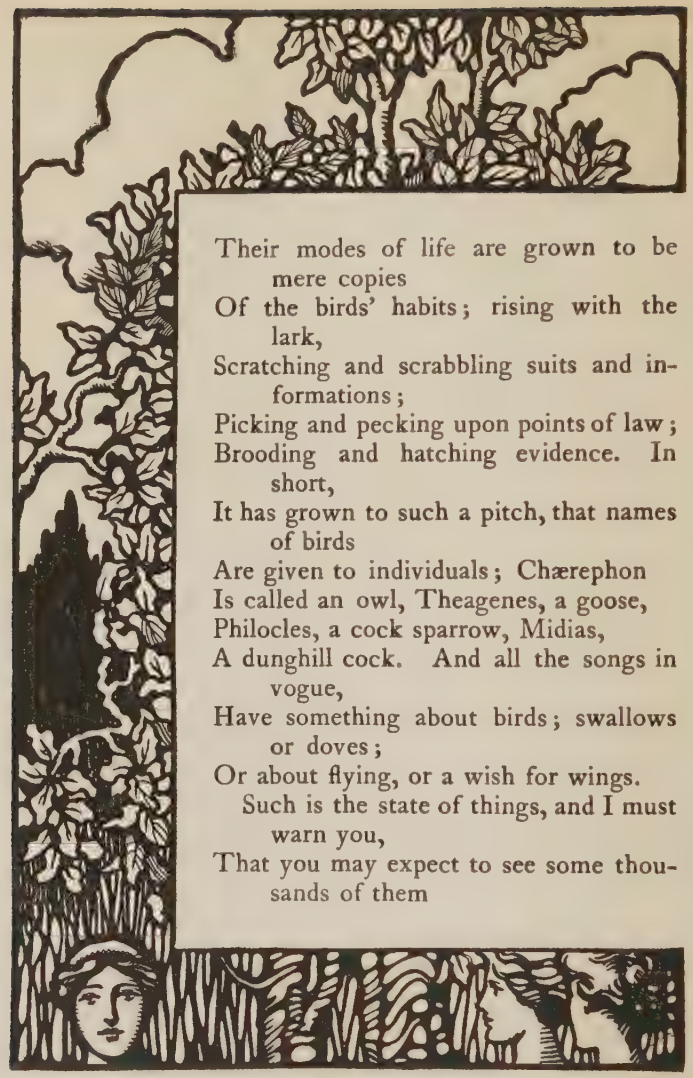
CHOR. Notice is hereby given,
To the deities of heaven;
Not to trespass here,
Upon our atmosphere;
Take notice; from the present day,
No smoke or incense is allowed
To pass this way.

— *From "The Birds."*

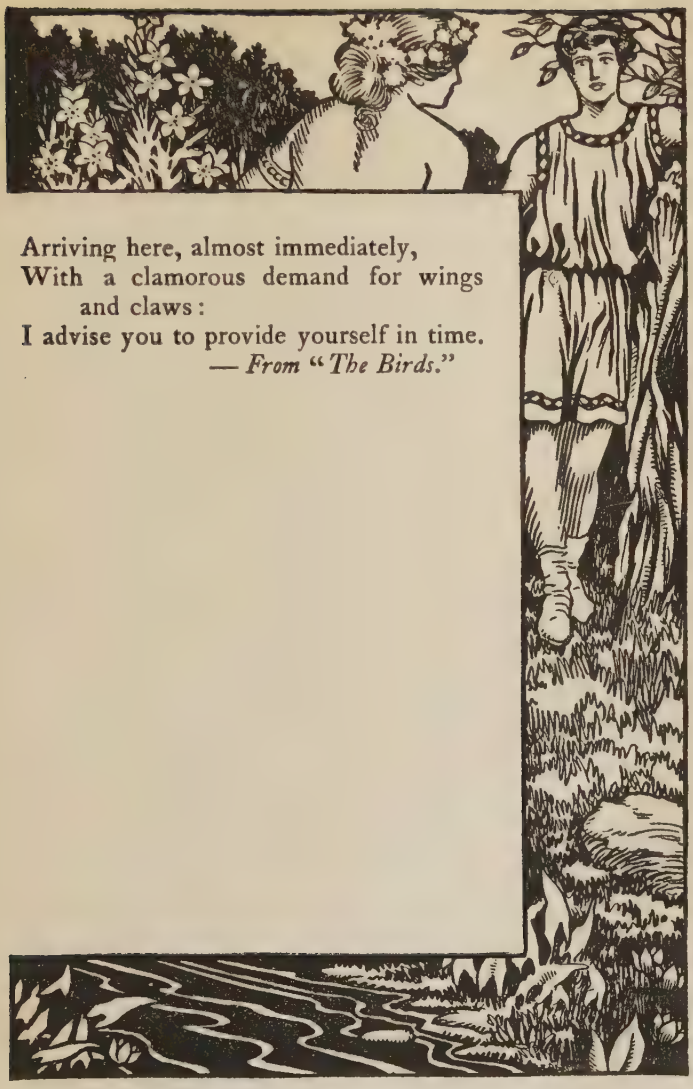


APOSTROPHE TO PEISTHETAIRUS

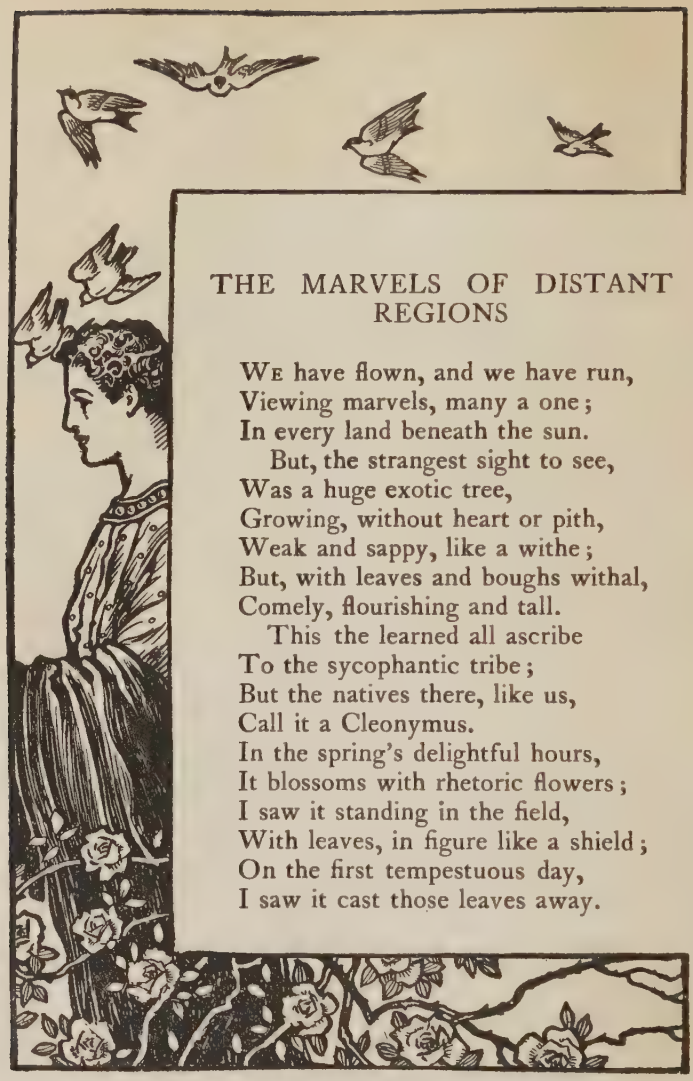
O MOST noble founder
Of this supereminent celestial city,
You can't conceive the clamour of applause,
The enthusiastic popularity,
That attends upon your name; the impulse and stir,
That moves among mankind, to colonize
And migrate hither. In the time before,
There was a Spartan mania, and people went
Stalking about the streets, with Spartan staves,
With their long hair, unwashed and slovenly,
Like so many Socrateses: but, of late,
Birds are the fashion — Birds are all in all —



Their modes of life are grown to be
mere copies
Of the birds' habits; rising with the
lark,
Scratching and scrabbling suits and in-
formations;
Picking and pecking upon points of law;
Brooding and hatching evidence. In
short,
It has grown to such a pitch, that names
of birds
Are given to individuals; Chærephon
Is called an owl, Theagenes, a goose,
Philocles, a cock sparrow, Midias,
A dunghill cock. And all the songs in
vogue,
Have something about birds; swallows
or doves;
Or about flying, or a wish for wings.
Such is the state of things, and I must
warn you,
That you may expect to see some thou-
sands of them

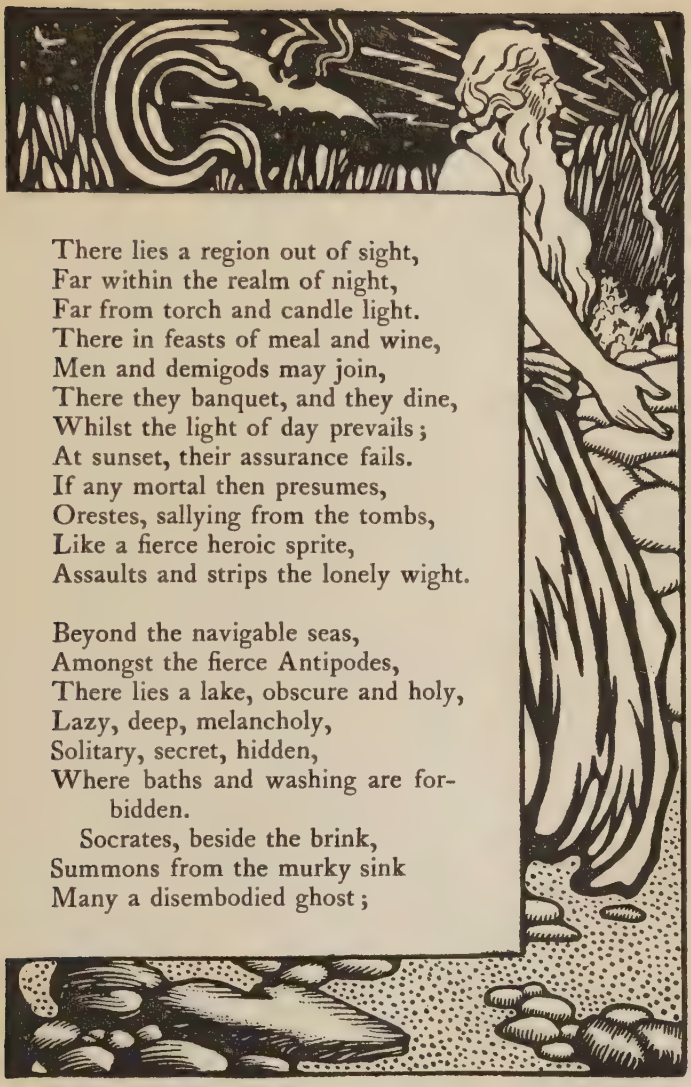


Arriving here, almost immediately,
With a clamorous demand for wings
and claws:
I advise you to provide yourself in time.
— *From* "*The Birds.*"



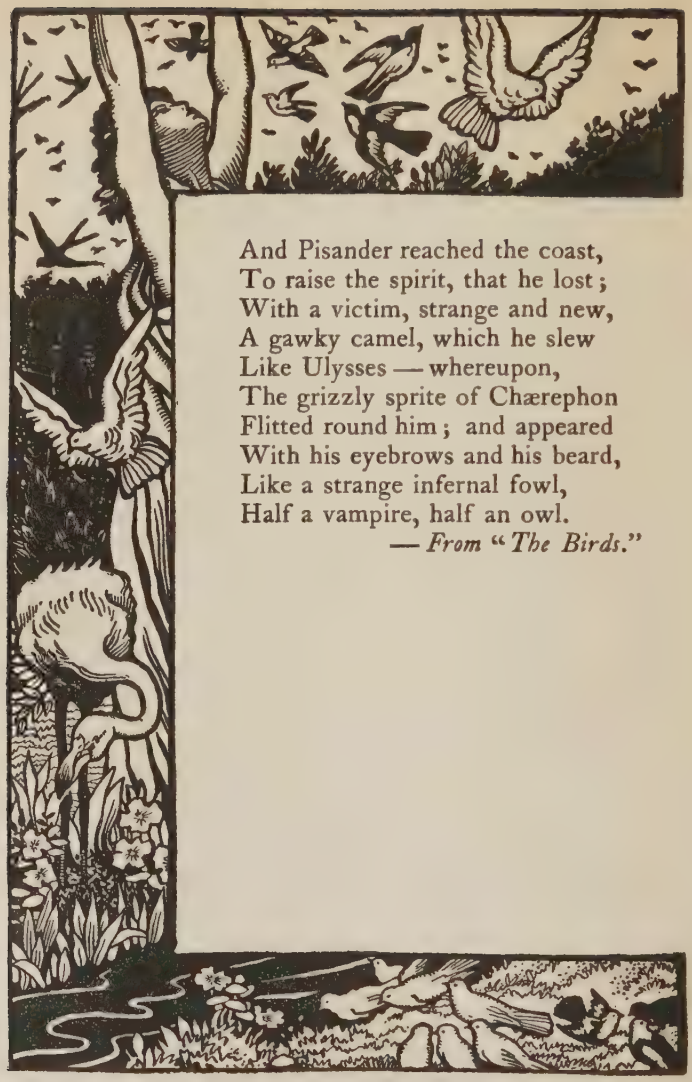
THE MARVELS OF DISTANT REGIONS

We have flown, and we have run,
Viewing marvels, many a one;
In every land beneath the sun.
 But, the strangest sight to see,
Was a huge exotic tree,
Growing, without heart or pith,
Weak and sappy, like a withe;
But, with leaves and boughs withal,
Comely, flourishing and tall.
 This the learned all ascribe
To the sycophantic tribe;
But the natives there, like us,
Call it a Cleonymus.
In the spring's delightful hours,
It blossoms with rhetoric flowers;
I saw it standing in the field,
With leaves, in figure like a shield;
On the first tempestuous day,
I saw it cast those leaves away.

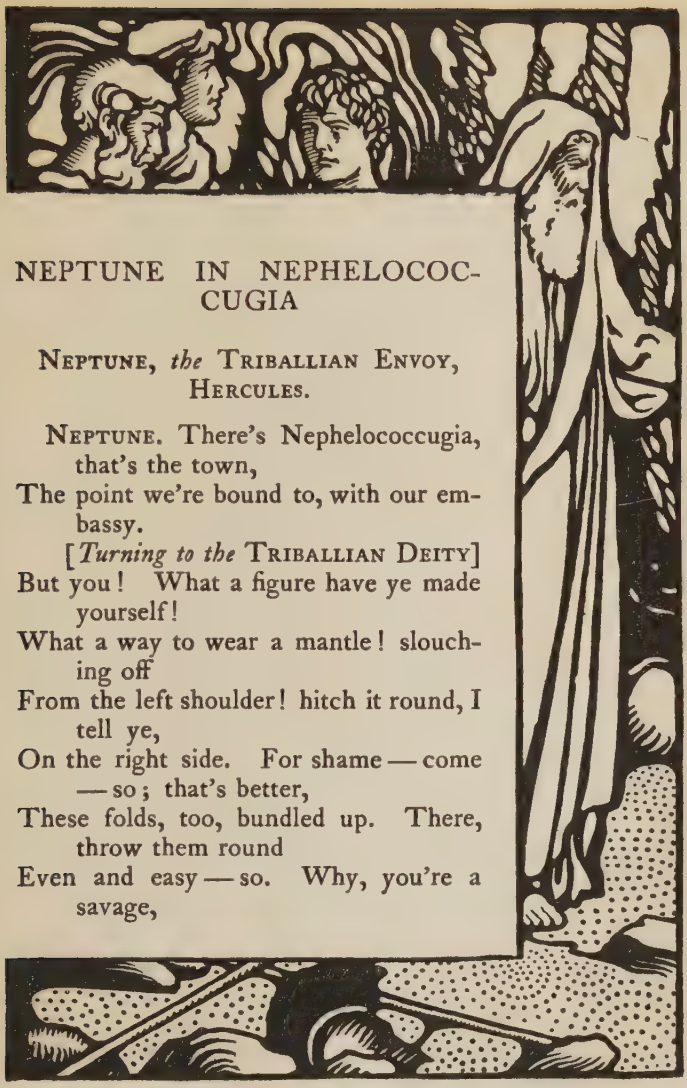


There lies a region out of sight,
Far within the realm of night,
Far from torch and candle light.
There in feasts of meal and wine,
Men and demigods may join,
There they banquet, and they dine,
Whilst the light of day prevails;
At sunset, their assurance fails.
If any mortal then presumes,
Orestes, sallying from the tombs,
Like a fierce heroic sprite,
Assaults and strips the lonely wight.

Beyond the navigable seas,
Amongst the fierce Antipodes,
There lies a lake, obscure and holy,
Lazy, deep, melancholy,
Solitary, secret, hidden,
Where baths and washing are forbidden.
Socrates, beside the brink,
Summons from the murky sink
Many a disembodied ghost;



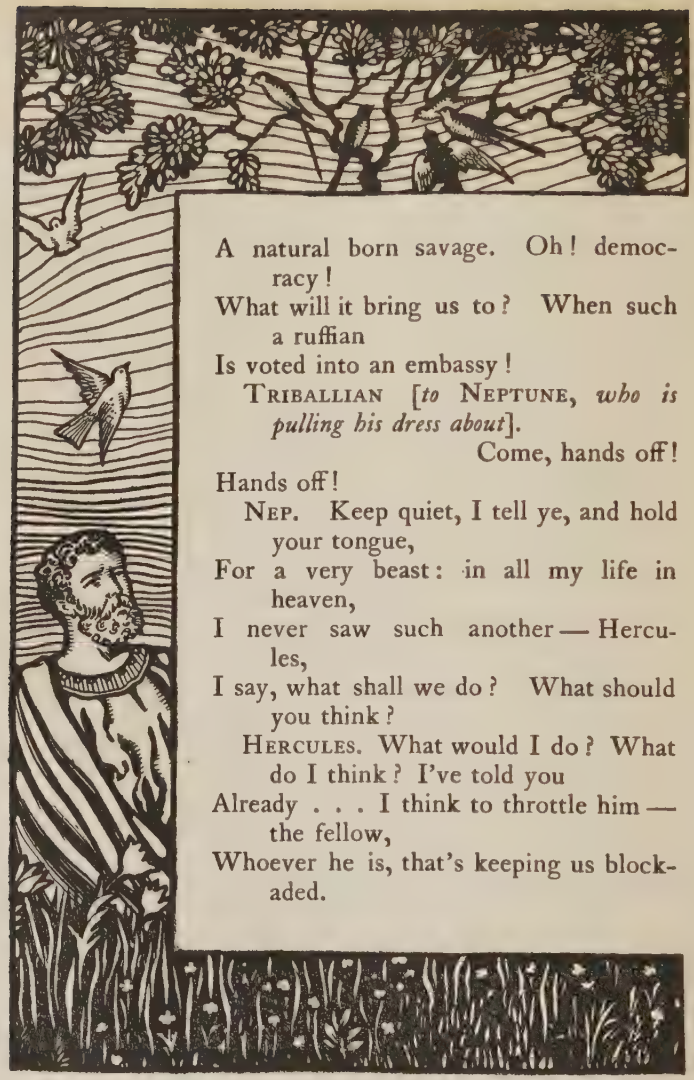
And Pisander reached the coast,
To raise the spirit, that he lost;
With a victim, strange and new,
A gawky camel, which he slew
Like Ulysses — whereupon,
The grizzly sprite of Chærephon
Flitted round him; and appeared
With his eyebrows and his beard,
Like a strange infernal fowl,
Half a vampire, half an owl.
— *From* "*The Birds.*"



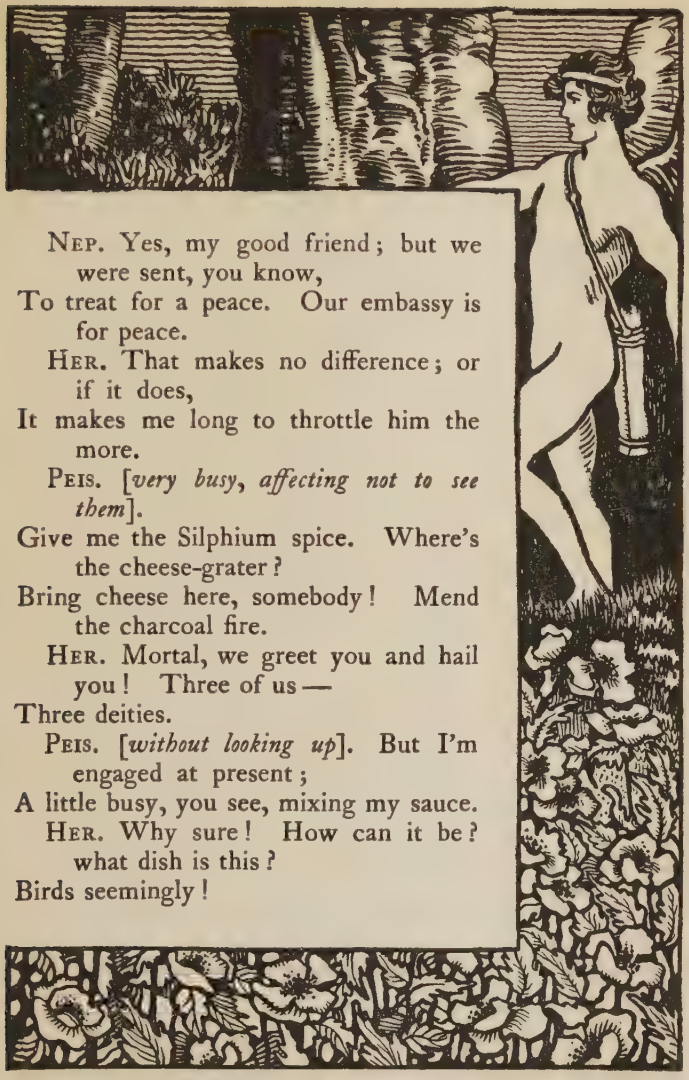
NEPTUNE IN NEPHELOCOCCUGIA

NEPTUNE, *the* TRIBALLIAN ENVOY, HERCULES.

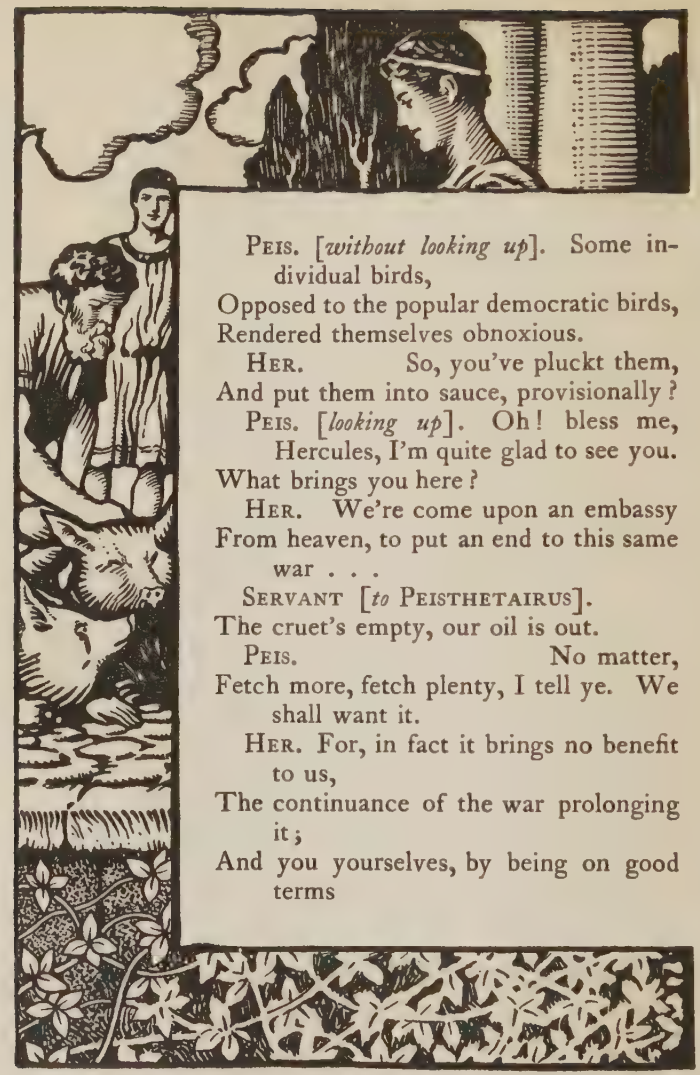
NEPTUNE. There's Nephelococcugia, that's the town,
The point we're bound to, with our embassy.
[*Turning to the* TRIBALLIAN DEITY]
But you! What a figure have ye made yourself!
What a way to wear a mantle! slouching off
From the left shoulder! hitch it round, I tell ye,
On the right side. For shame — come — so; that's better,
These folds, too, bundled up. There, throw them round
Even and easy — so. Why, you're a savage,



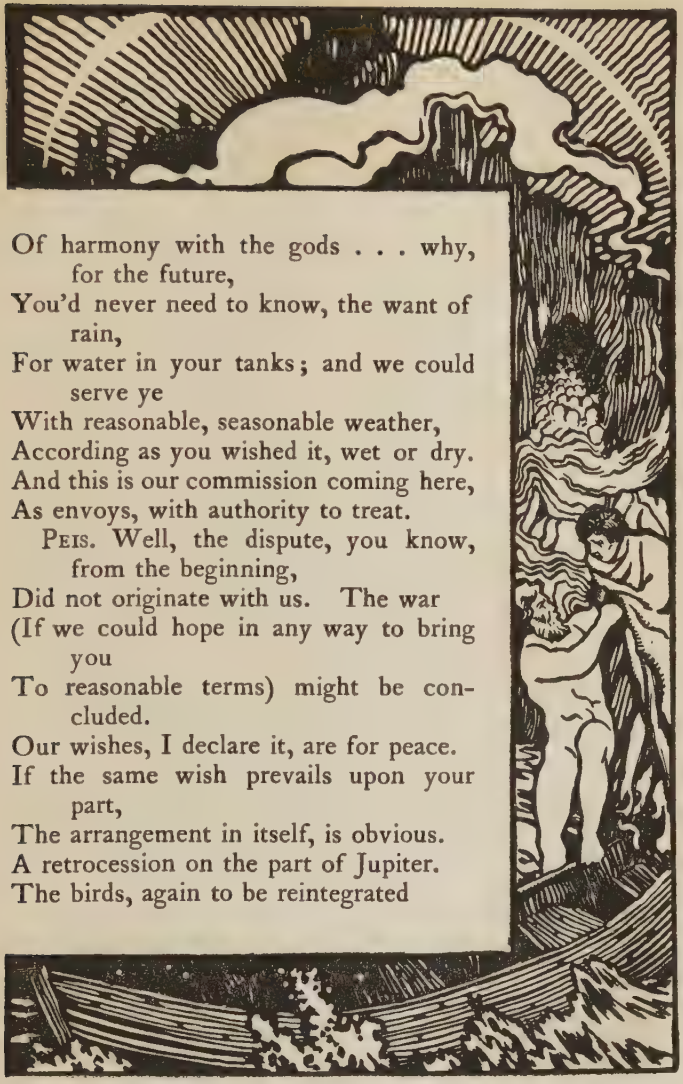
A natural born savage. Oh! democracy!
What will it bring us to? When such a ruffian
Is voted into an embassy!
TRIBALLIAN [*to* NEPTUNE, *who is pulling his dress about*].
Come, hands off!
Hands off!
NEP. Keep quiet, I tell ye, and hold your tongue,
For a very beast: in all my life in heaven,
I never saw such another — Hercules,
I say, what shall we do? What should you think?
HERCULES. What would I do? What do I think? I've told you
Already . . . I think to throttle him — the fellow,
Whoever he is, that's keeping us blockaded.



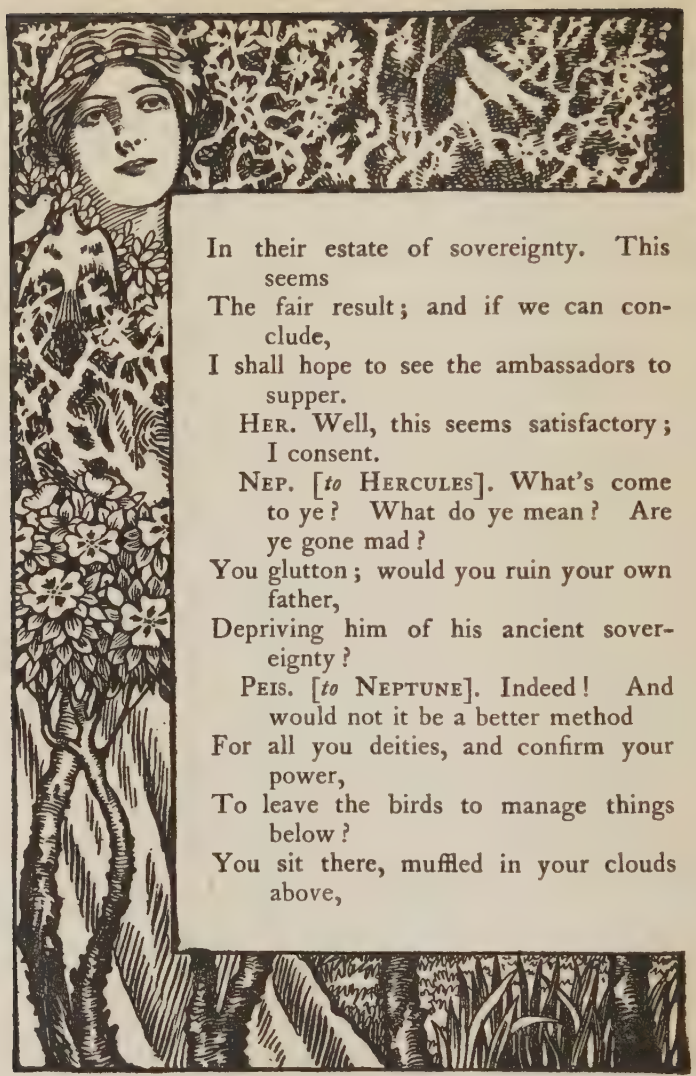
NEP. Yes, my good friend; but we
were sent, you know,
To treat for a peace. Our embassy is
for peace.
HER. That makes no difference; or
if it does,
It makes me long to throttle him the
more.
PEIS. [*very busy, affecting not to see
them*].
Give me the Silphium spice. Where's
the cheese-grater?
Bring cheese here, somebody! Mend
the charcoal fire.
HER. Mortal, we greet you and hail
you! Three of us —
Three deities.
PEIS. [*without looking up*]. But I'm
engaged at present;
A little busy, you see, mixing my sauce.
HER. Why sure! How can it be?
what dish is this?
Birds seemingly!



PEIS. [*without looking up*]. Some individual birds,
Opposed to the popular democratic birds,
Rendered themselves obnoxious.
HER. So, you've pluckt them,
And put them into sauce, provisionally?
PEIS. [*looking up*]. Oh! bless me,
Hercules, I'm quite glad to see you.
What brings you here?
HER. We're come upon an embassy
From heaven, to put an end to this same war . . .
SERVANT [*to* PEISTHETAIRUS].
The cruet's empty, our oil is out.
PEIS. No matter,
Fetch more, fetch plenty, I tell ye. We shall want it.
HER. For, in fact it brings no benefit to us,
The continuance of the war prolonging it;
And you yourselves, by being on good terms



Of harmony with the gods . . . why,
for the future,
You'd never need to know, the want of
rain,
For water in your tanks; and we could
serve ye
With reasonable, seasonable weather,
According as you wished it, wet or dry.
And this is our commission coming here,
As envoys, with authority to treat.
PEIS. Well, the dispute, you know,
from the beginning,
Did not originate with us. The war
(If we could hope in any way to bring
you
To reasonable terms) might be con-
cluded.
Our wishes, I declare it, are for peace.
If the same wish prevails upon your
part,
The arrangement in itself, is obvious.
A retrocession on the part of Jupiter.
The birds, again to be reintegrated

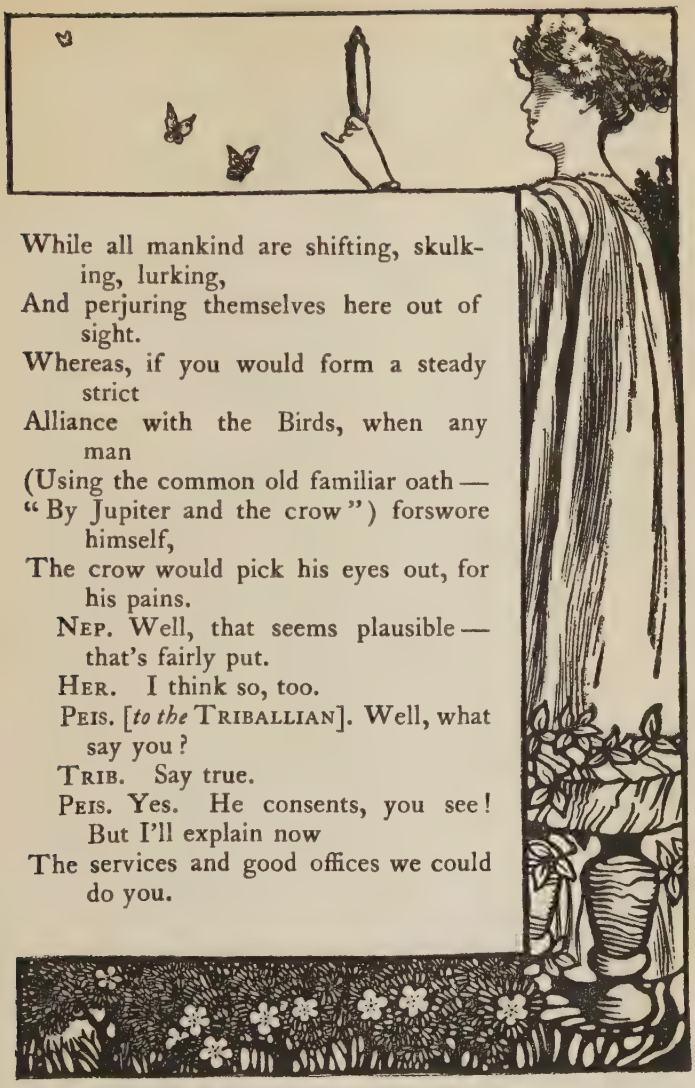


In their estate of sovereignty. This seems
The fair result; and if we can conclude,
I shall hope to see the ambassadors to supper.

HER. Well, this seems satisfactory; I consent.

NEP. [*to* HERCULES]. What's come to ye? What do ye mean? Are ye gone mad?
You glutton; would you ruin your own father,
Depriving him of his ancient sovereignty?

PEIS. [*to* NEPTUNE]. Indeed! And would not it be a better method
For all you deities, and confirm your power,
To leave the birds to manage things below?
You sit there, muffled in your clouds above,



While all mankind are shifting, skulking, lurking,
And perjuring themselves here out of sight.
Whereas, if you would form a steady strict
Alliance with the Birds, when any man
(Using the common old familiar oath —
"By Jupiter and the crow") forswore himself,
The crow would pick his eyes out, for his pains.

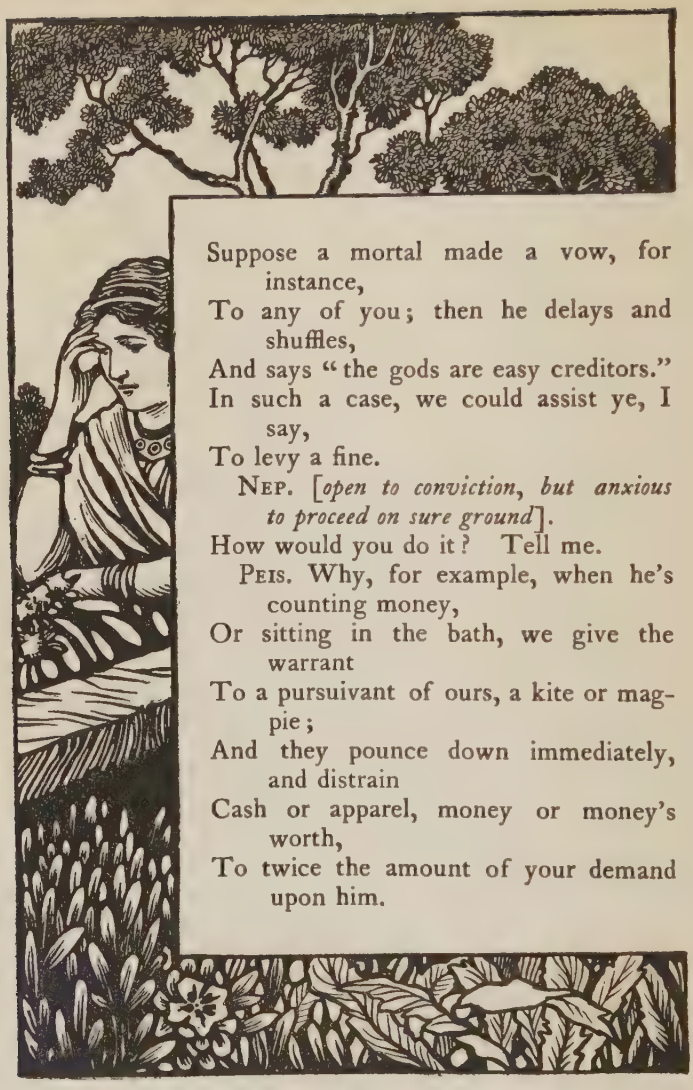
NEP. Well, that seems plausible — that's fairly put.

HER. I think so, too.

PEIS. [*to the* TRIBALLIAN]. Well, what say you?

TRIB. Say true.

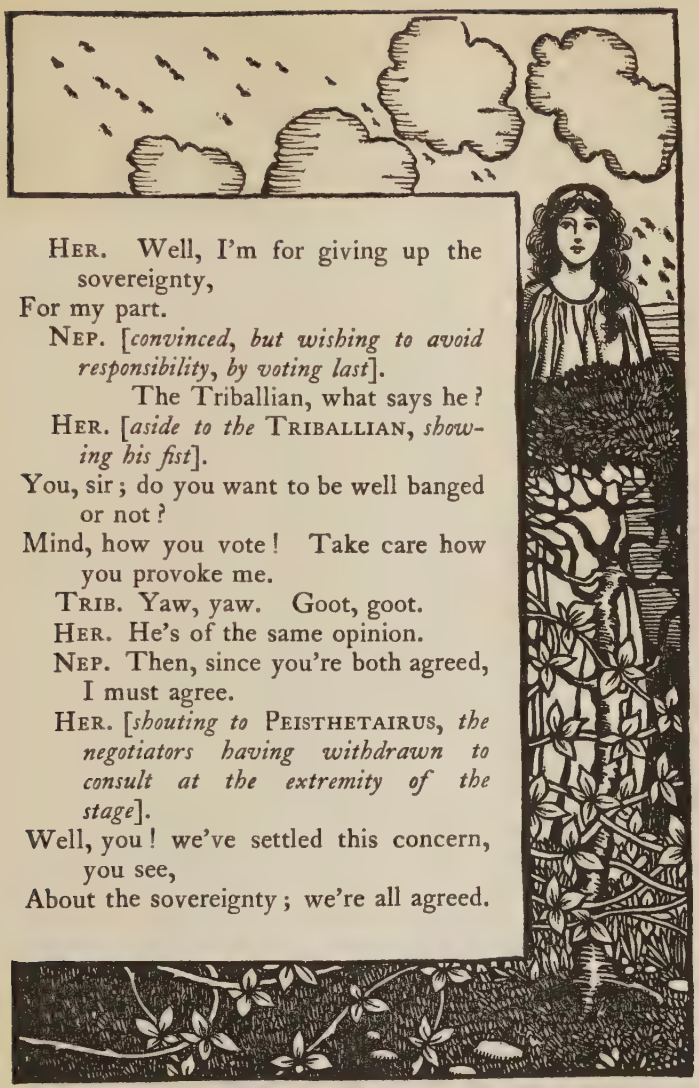
PEIS. Yes. He consents, you see! But I'll explain now
The services and good offices we could do you.



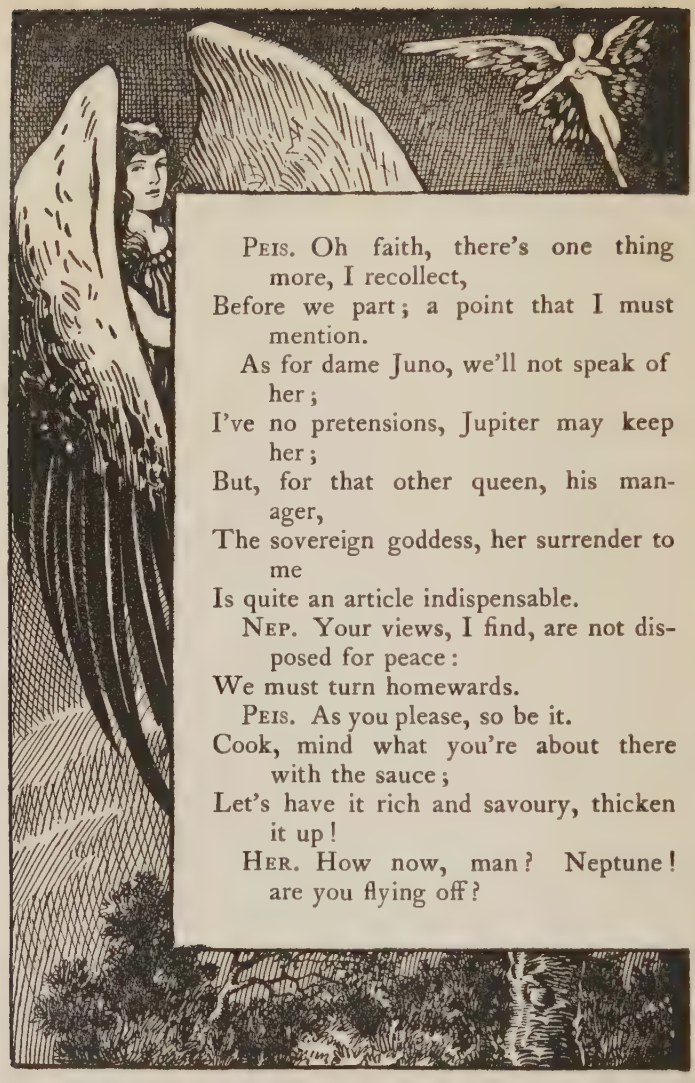
Suppose a mortal made a vow, for instance,
To any of you; then he delays and shuffles,
And says "the gods are easy creditors."
In such a case, we could assist ye, I say,
To levy a fine.

NEP. [*open to conviction, but anxious to proceed on sure ground*].
How would you do it? Tell me.

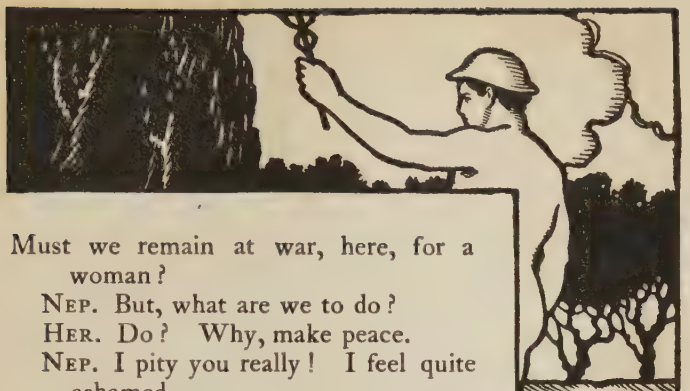
PEIS. Why, for example, when he's counting money,
Or sitting in the bath, we give the warrant
To a pursuivant of ours, a kite or magpie;
And they pounce down immediately, and distrain
Cash or apparel, money or money's worth,
To twice the amount of your demand upon him.



HER. Well, I'm for giving up the sovereignty,
For my part.
NEP. [*convinced, but wishing to avoid responsibility, by voting last*].
The Triballian, what says he?
HER. [*aside to the* TRIBALLIAN, *showing his fist*].
You, sir; do you want to be well banged or not?
Mind, how you vote! Take care how you provoke me.
TRIB. Yaw, yaw. Goot, goot.
HER. He's of the same opinion.
NEP. Then, since you're both agreed, I must agree.
HER. [*shouting to* PEISTHETAIRUS, *the negotiators having withdrawn to consult at the extremity of the stage*].
Well, you! we've settled this concern, you see,
About the sovereignty; we're all agreed.



PEIS. Oh faith, there's one thing more, I recollect,
Before we part; a point that I must mention.
As for dame Juno, we'll not speak of her;
I've no pretensions, Jupiter may keep her;
But, for that other queen, his manager,
The sovereign goddess, her surrender to me
Is quite an article indispensable.
NEP. Your views, I find, are not disposed for peace:
We must turn homewards.
PEIS. As you please, so be it.
Cook, mind what you're about there with the sauce;
Let's have it rich and savoury, thicken it up!
HER. How now, man? Neptune! are you flying off?



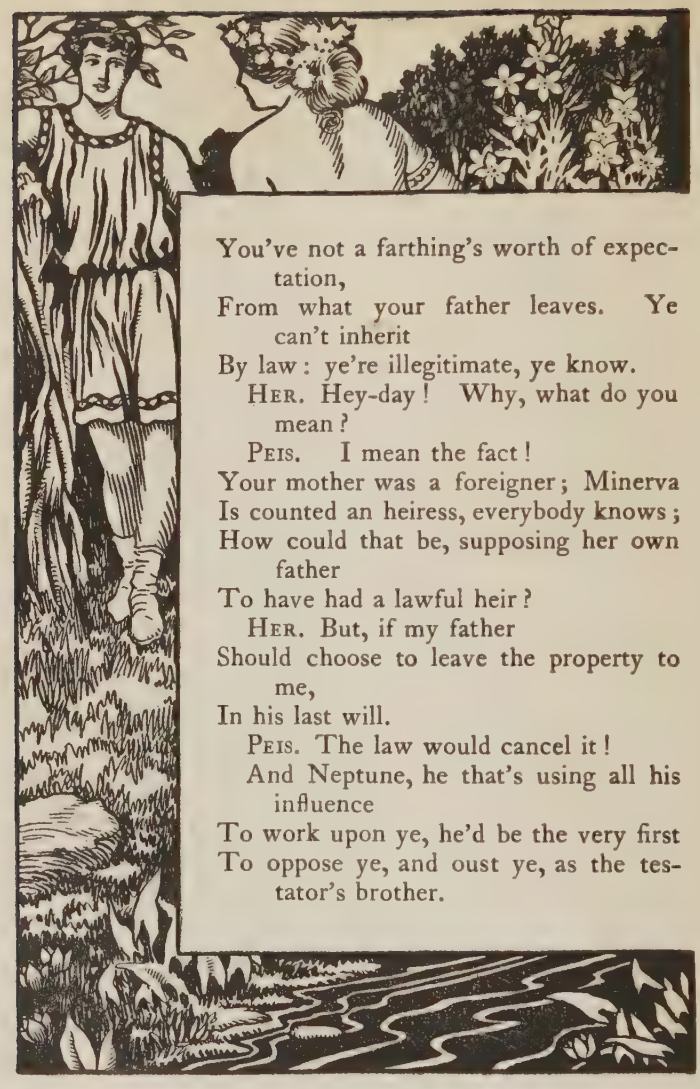
Must we remain at war, here, for a woman?

NEP. But, what are we to do?

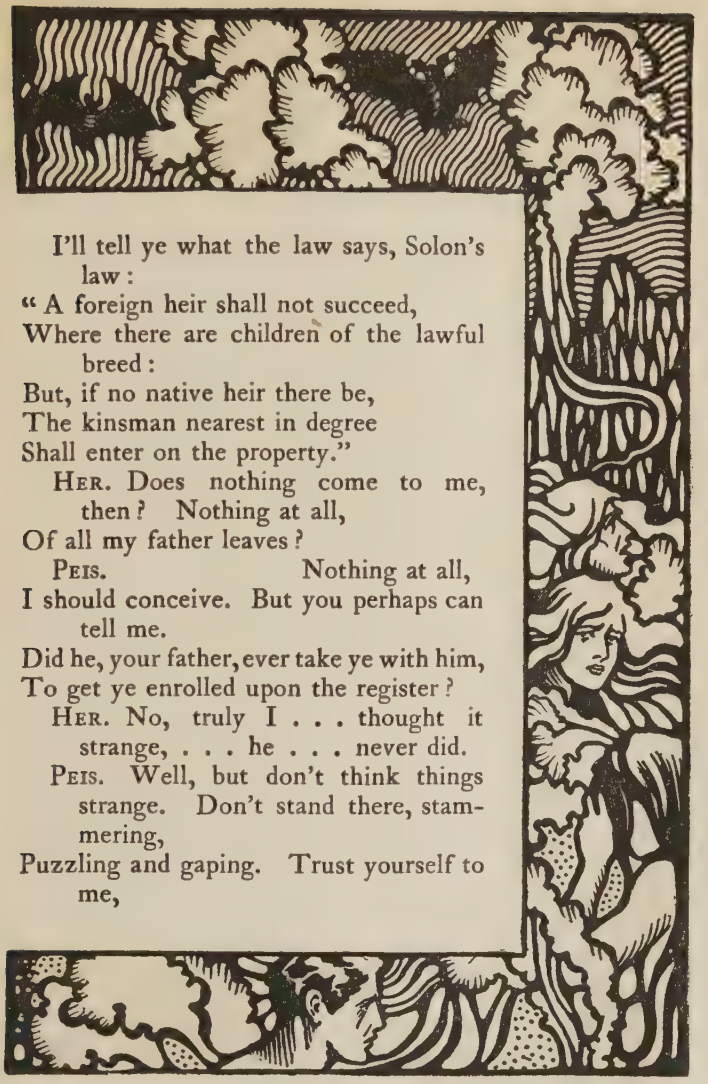
HER. Do? Why, make peace.

NEP. I pity you really! I feel quite ashamed
And sorry to see you; ruining yourself!
If anything should happen to your father,
After surrendering the sovereignty,
What's to become of you? When you yourself
Have voted away your whole inheritance:
At his decease, you must remain a beggar.

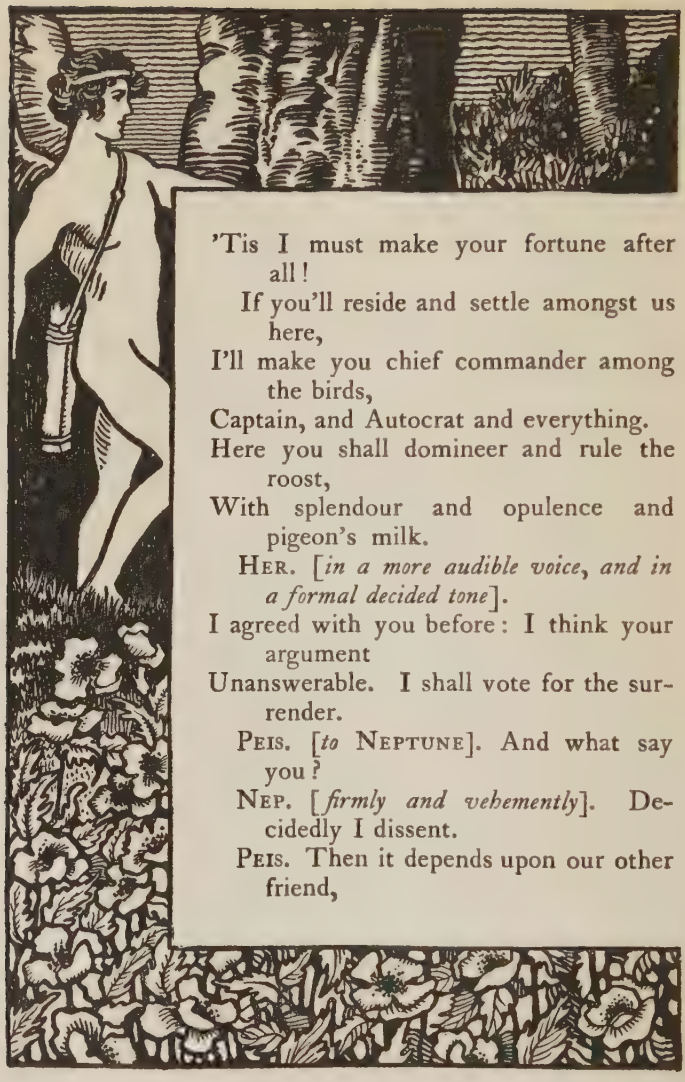
PEIS. [*aside to* HERCULES]. Ah, there! I thought so; he's coming over ye;
Step here a moment! Let me speak to ye!
Your uncle's chousing you, my poor dear friend,



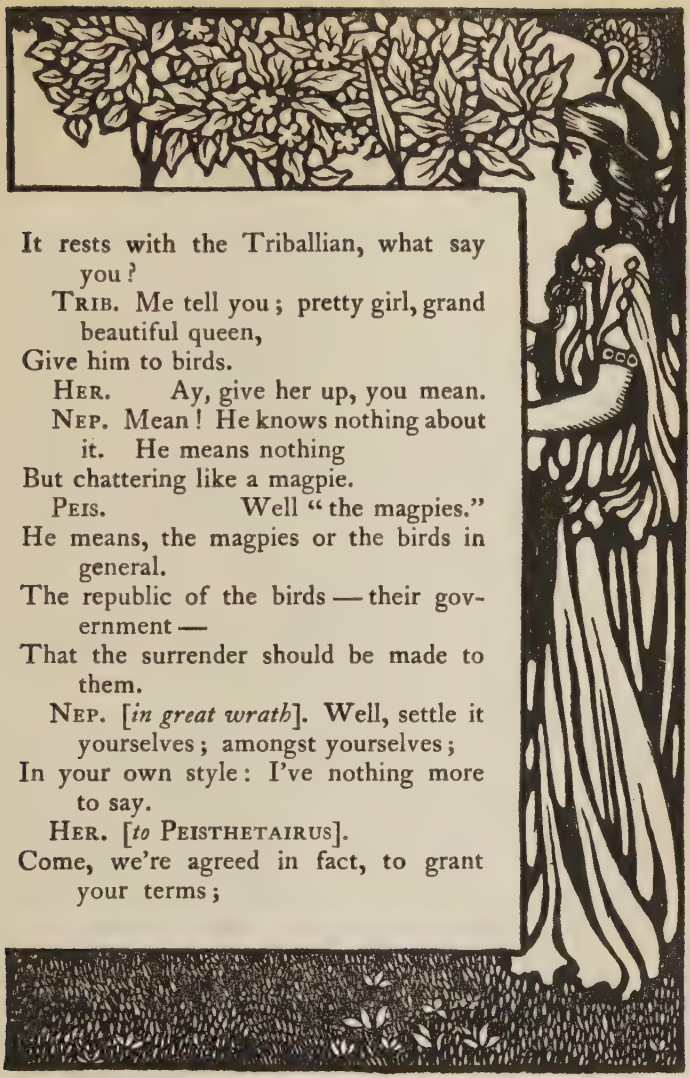
You've not a farthing's worth of expectation,
From what your father leaves. Ye can't inherit
By law: ye're illegitimate, ye know.
HER. Hey-day! Why, what do you mean?
PEIS. I mean the fact!
Your mother was a foreigner; Minerva
Is counted an heiress, everybody knows;
How could that be, supposing her own father
To have had a lawful heir?
HER. But, if my father
Should choose to leave the property to me,
In his last will.
PEIS. The law would cancel it!
And Neptune, he that's using all his influence
To work upon ye, he'd be the very first
To oppose ye, and oust ye, as the testator's brother.



I'll tell ye what the law says, Solon's law:
"A foreign heir shall not succeed,
Where there are children of the lawful breed:
But, if no native heir there be,
The kinsman nearest in degree
Shall enter on the property."
HER. Does nothing come to me, then? Nothing at all,
Of all my father leaves?
PEIS. Nothing at all,
I should conceive. But you perhaps can tell me.
Did he, your father, ever take ye with him,
To get ye enrolled upon the register?
HER. No, truly I . . . thought it strange, . . . he . . . never did.
PEIS. Well, but don't think things strange. Don't stand there, stammering,
Puzzling and gaping. Trust yourself to me,



'Tis I must make your fortune after all!
If you'll reside and settle amongst us here,
I'll make you chief commander among the birds,
Captain, and Autocrat and everything.
Here you shall domineer and rule the roost,
With splendour and opulence and pigeon's milk.
HER. [*in a more audible voice, and in a formal decided tone*].
I agreed with you before: I think your argument
Unanswerable. I shall vote for the surrender.
PEIS. [*to* NEPTUNE]. And what say you?
NEP. [*firmly and vehemently*]. Decidedly I dissent.
PEIS. Then it depends upon our other friend,



It rests with the Triballian, what say you?

TRIB. Me tell you; pretty girl, grand beautiful queen,
Give him to birds.

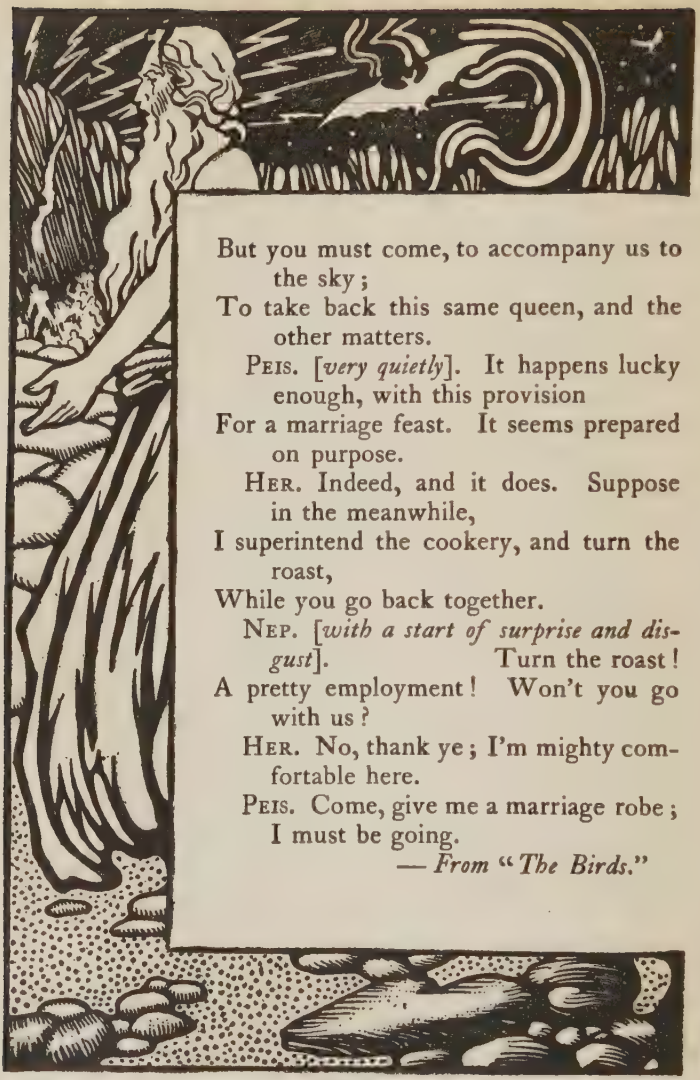
HER. Ay, give her up, you mean.

NEP. Mean! He knows nothing about it. He means nothing
But chattering like a magpie.

PEIS. Well "the magpies."
He means, the magpies or the birds in general.
The republic of the birds — their government —
That the surrender should be made to them.

NEP. [*in great wrath*]. Well, settle it yourselves; amongst yourselves;
In your own style: I've nothing more to say.

HER. [*to* PEISTHETAIRUS].
Come, we're agreed in fact, to grant your terms;



But you must come, to accompany us to the sky;
To take back this same queen, and the other matters.

PEIS. [*very quietly*]. It happens lucky enough, with this provision
For a marriage feast. It seems prepared on purpose.

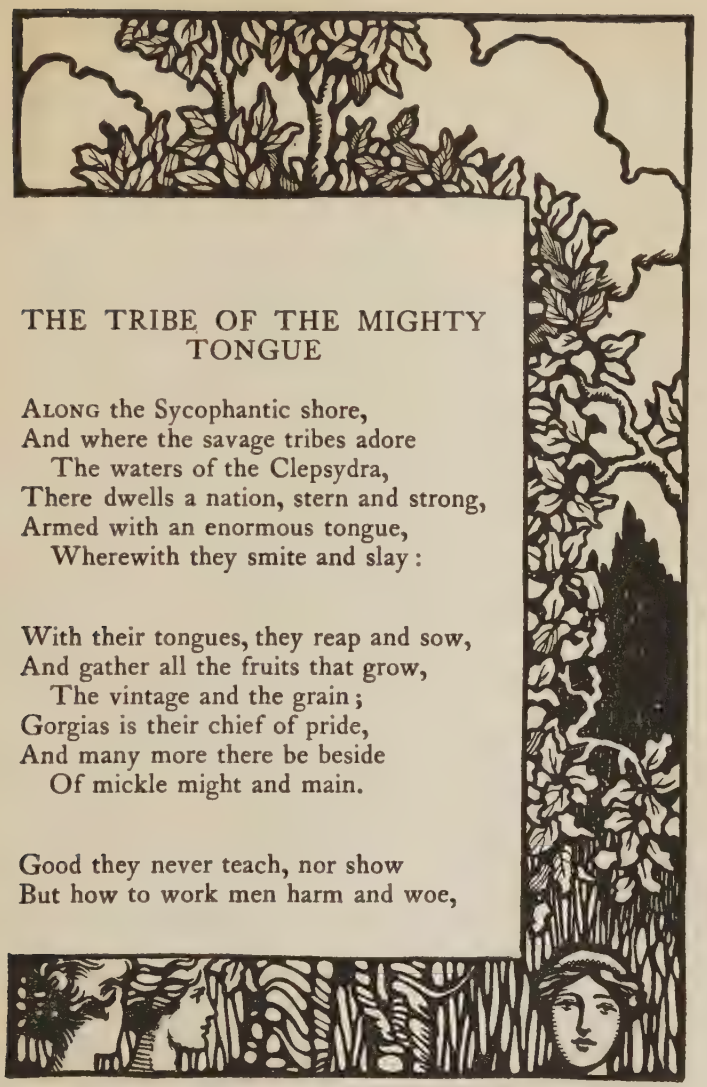
HER. Indeed, and it does. Suppose in the meanwhile,
I superintend the cookery, and turn the roast,
While you go back together.

NEP. [*with a start of surprise and disgust*]. Turn the roast!
A pretty employment! Won't you go with us?

HER. No, thank ye; I'm mighty comfortable here.

PEIS. Come, give me a marriage robe; I must be going.

— *From* "*The Birds.*"

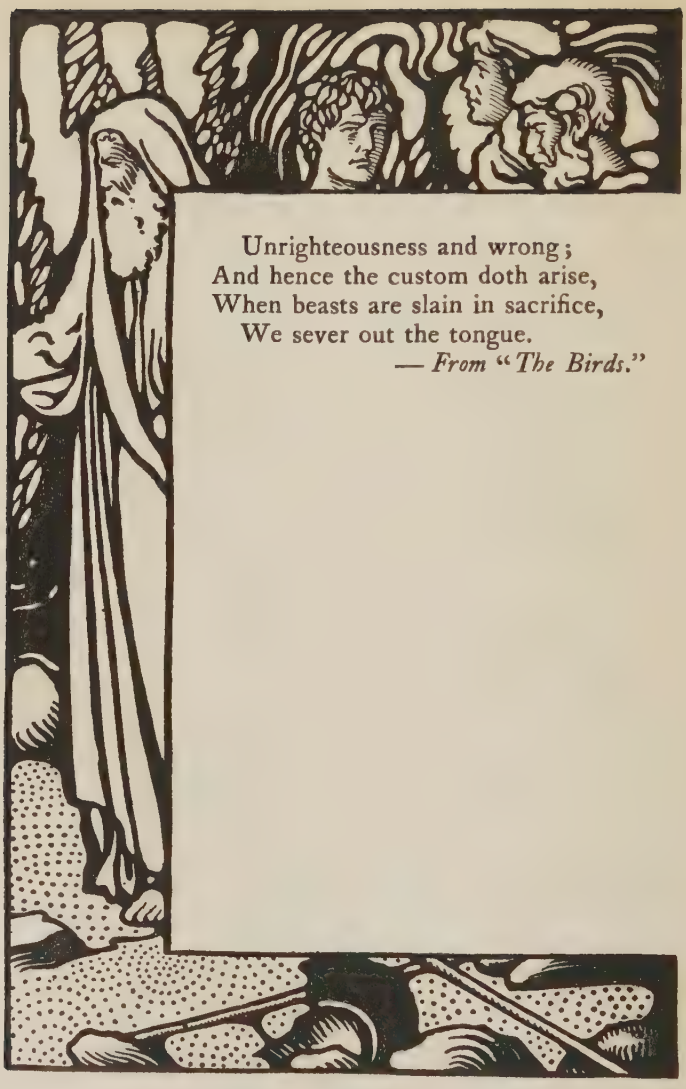


THE TRIBE OF THE MIGHTY TONGUE

Along the Sycophantic shore,
And where the savage tribes adore
 The waters of the Clepsydra,
There dwells a nation, stern and strong,
Armed with an enormous tongue,
 Wherewith they smite and slay:

With their tongues, they reap and sow,
And gather all the fruits that grow,
 The vintage and the grain;
Gorgias is their chief of pride,
And many more there be beside
 Of mickle might and main.

Good they never teach, nor show
But how to work men harm and woe,



Unrighteousness and wrong;
And hence the custom doth arise,
When beasts are slain in sacrifice,
We sever out the tongue.

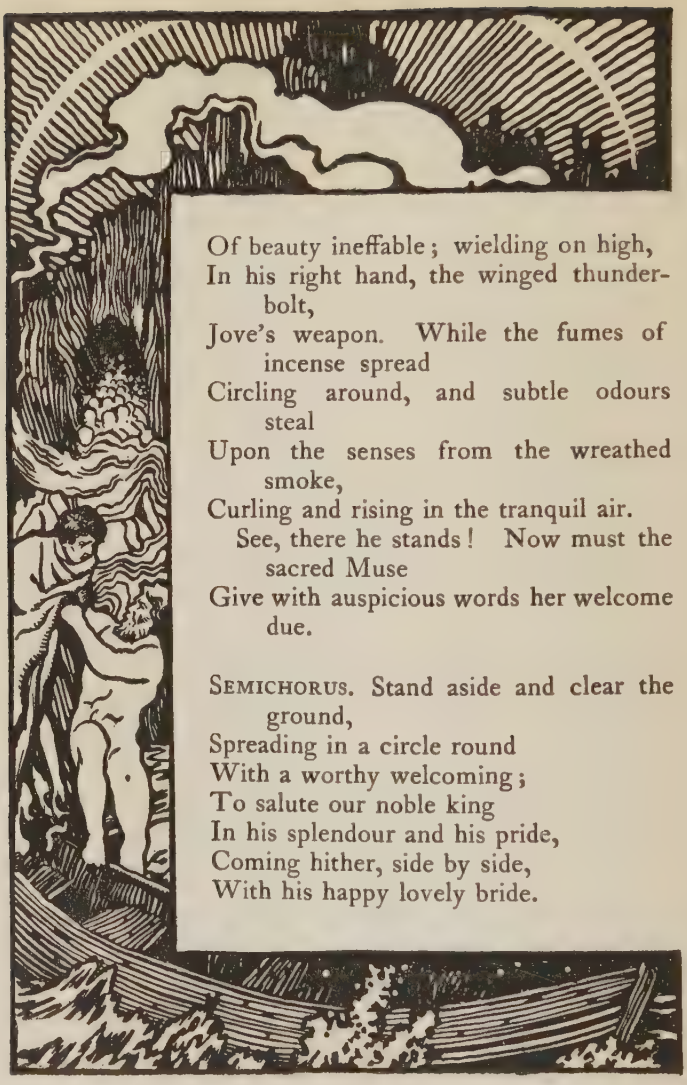
— *From "The Birds."*



APOTHEOSIS OF PEISTHETAIRUS

HARBINGER *or* HERALD, *announcing the approach of* PEISTHETAIRUS.

O FORTUNATE! O triumphant! O beyond
All power of speech or thought, supremely blest,
Prosperous happy birds! Behold your king,
Here in his glorious palace! Mark his entrance,
Dazzling all eyes, resplendent as a star;
Outshining all the golden lights, that beam
From the rich roof, even as a summer sun,
Or brighter than the sun, blazing at noon.
He comes; and at his side a female form



Of beauty ineffable; wielding on high,
In his right hand, the winged thunder-
bolt,
Jove's weapon. While the fumes of
incense spread
Circling around, and subtle odours
steal
Upon the senses from the wreathed
smoke,
Curling and rising in the tranquil air.
See, there he stands! Now must the
sacred Muse
Give with auspicious words her welcome
due.

SEMICHORUS. Stand aside and clear the
ground,
Spreading in a circle round
With a worthy welcoming;
To salute our noble king
In his splendour and his pride,
Coming hither, side by side,
With his happy lovely bride.



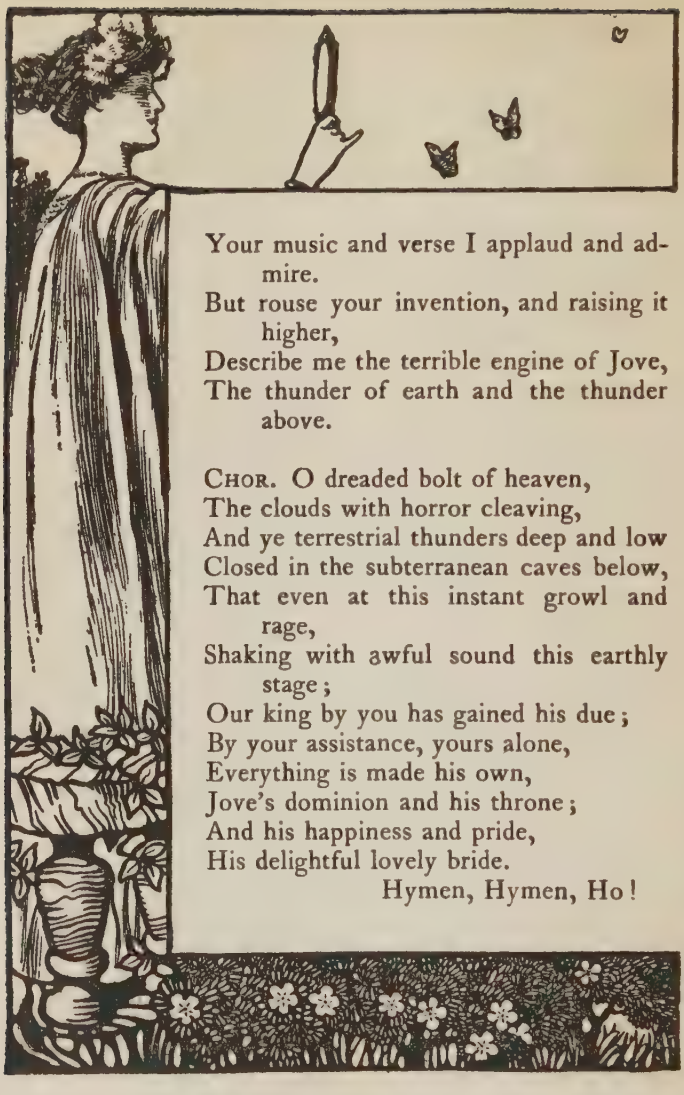
O the fair delightful face!
What a figure! What a grace!
What a presence! What a carriage!
What a noble worthy marriage.

Let the birds rejoice and sing,
At the wedding of the king:
Happy to congratulate
Such a blessing to the State.
Hymen, Hymen, Ho!

Jupiter, that god sublime,
When the Fates, in former time,
Matched him with the Queen of Heaven,
At a solemn banquet given,
Such a feast was held above,
And the charming God of Love,
Being present in command,
As a Bridesman took his stand,
With the golden reins in hand.
Hymen, Hymen, Ho!

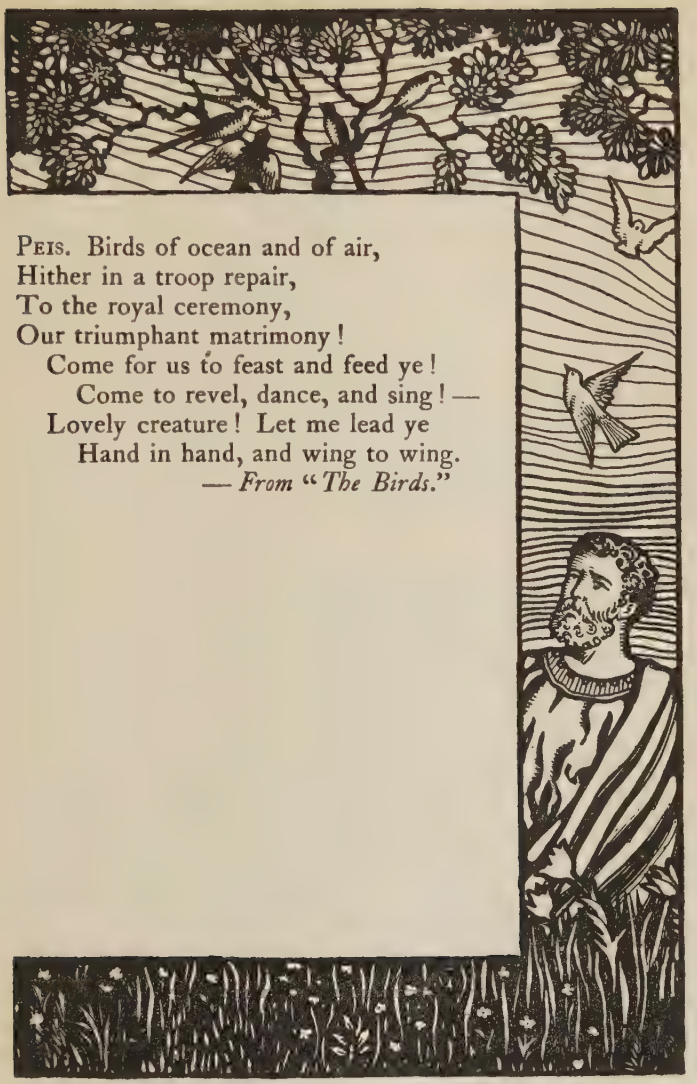
PEIS. I accept and approve the marks of your love,



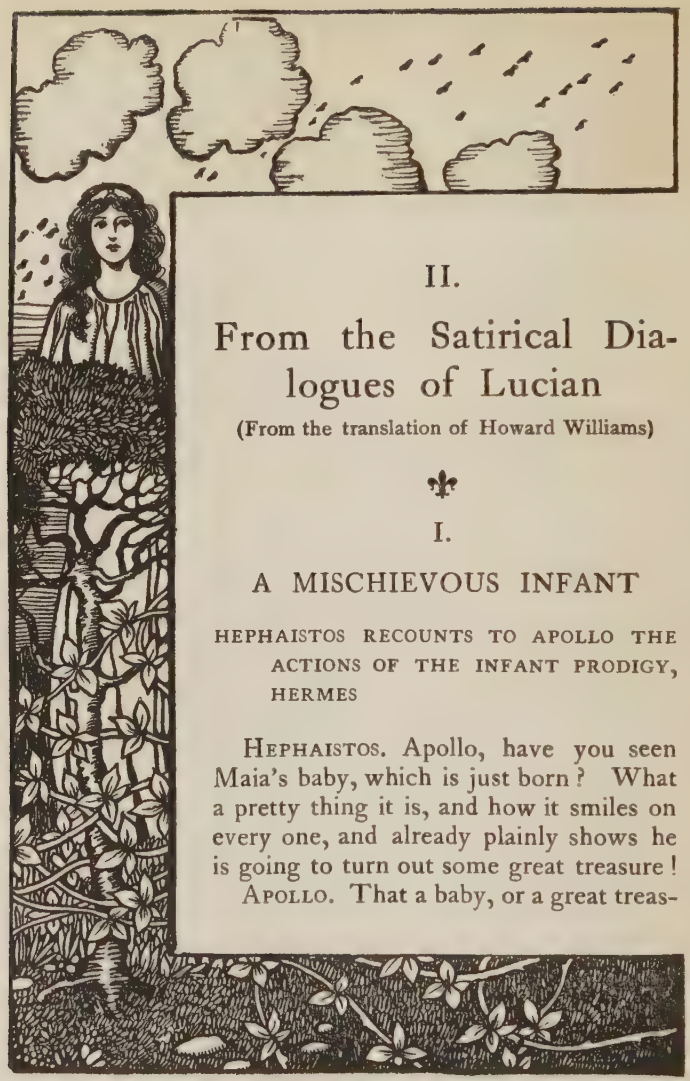


Your music and verse I applaud and admire.
But rouse your invention, and raising it higher,
Describe me the terrible engine of Jove,
The thunder of earth and the thunder above.

Chor. O dreaded bolt of heaven,
The clouds with horror cleaving,
And ye terrestrial thunders deep and low
Closed in the subterranean caves below,
That even at this instant growl and rage,
Shaking with awful sound this earthly stage;
Our king by you has gained his due;
By your assistance, yours alone,
Everything is made his own,
Jove's dominion and his throne;
And his happiness and pride,
His delightful lovely bride.
Hymen, Hymen, Ho!



Peis. Birds of ocean and of air,
Hither in a troop repair,
To the royal ceremony,
Our triumphant matrimony!
Come for us to feast and feed ye!
Come to revel, dance, and sing! —
Lovely creature! Let me lead ye
Hand in hand, and wing to wing.
— *From* "*The Birds.*"



II.

From the Satirical Dialogues of Lucian

(From the translation of Howard Williams)

I.

A MISCHIEVOUS INFANT

HEPHAISTOS RECOUNTS TO APOLLO THE ACTIONS OF THE INFANT PRODIGY, HERMES

HEPHAISTOS. Apollo, have you seen Maia's baby, which is just born? What a pretty thing it is, and how it smiles on every one, and already plainly shows he is going to turn out some great treasure!

APOLLO. That a baby, or a great treas-



ure, who is older than Iapetus himself, as far as depends on rascality!

Heph. And what possible mischief could an infant just born be able to do?

Ap. Ask Poseidon, whose trident he stole, or Ares; for even from the latter he abstracted his sword from the sheath without being found out, not to speak of myself, whom he disarmed of my bow and arrows.

Heph. The new-born brat did this, who hardly keeps on his feet, who is still in his long clothes?

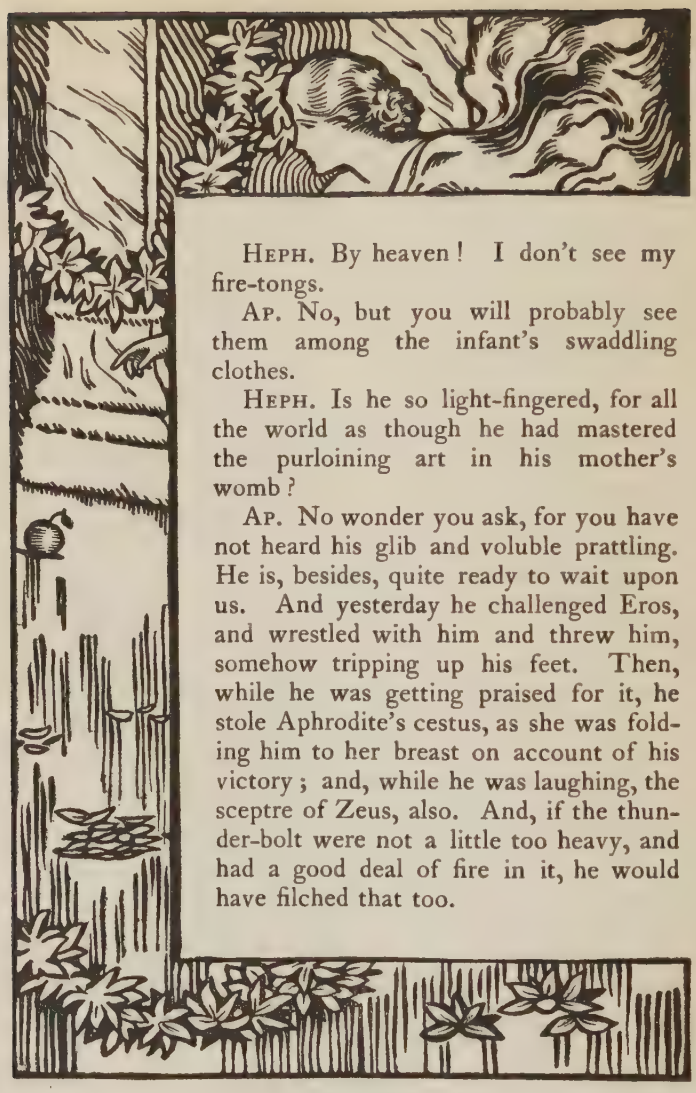
Ap. You will know well enough, Hephaistos, if only he come near you.

Heph. Indeed, he already has been near me.

Ap. Well, have you all your tools, and is none of them missing?

Heph. All of them are safe, my dear Apollo.

Ap. All the same, examine carefully.



HEPH. By heaven! I don't see my fire-tongs.

AP. No, but you will probably see them among the infant's swaddling clothes.

HEPH. Is he so light-fingered, for all the world as though he had mastered the purloining art in his mother's womb?

AP. No wonder you ask, for you have not heard his glib and voluble prattling. He is, besides, quite ready to wait upon us. And yesterday he challenged Eros, and wrestled with him and threw him, somehow tripping up his feet. Then, while he was getting praised for it, he stole Aphrodite's cestus, as she was folding him to her breast on account of his victory; and, while he was laughing, the sceptre of Zeus, also. And, if the thunder-bolt were not a little too heavy, and had a good deal of fire in it, he would have filched that too.

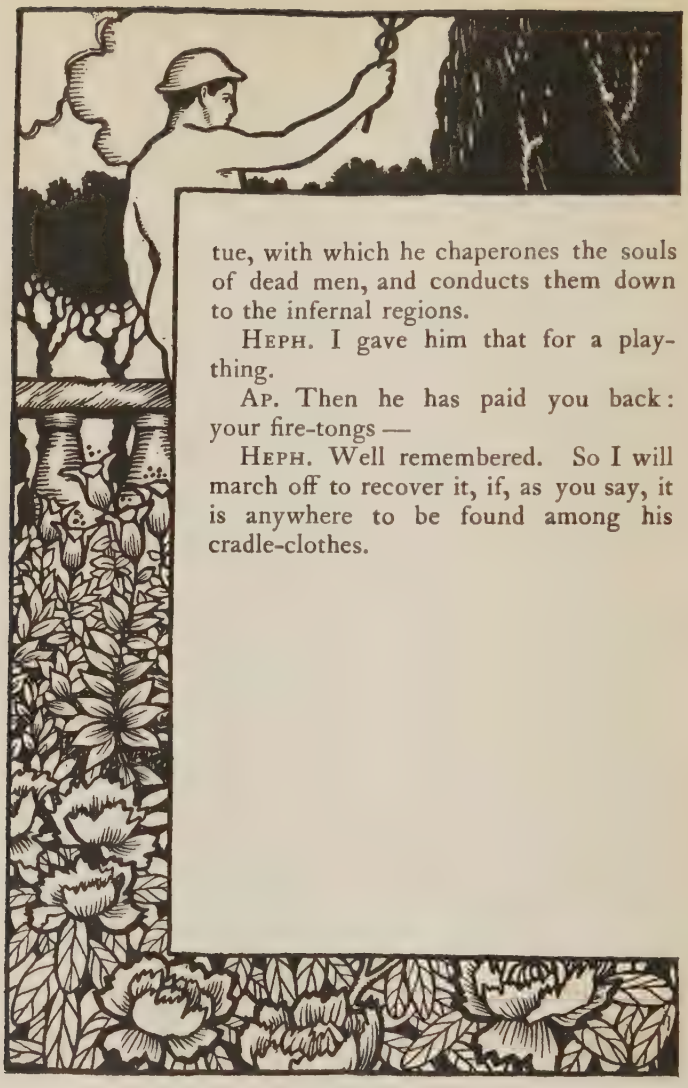


HEPH. The child you describe is a regular Gorgon.

AP. Not only so, but already he is a musical genius, also.

HEPH. From what can you draw your inference as to that?

AP. Somewhere or other he found a dead tortoise, and from it formed a musical instrument: for, having fitted in the side-pieces and joined them by a bar, he next fixed pegs, and inserted a bridge beneath them; and, after stretching seven strings upon it, he set about playing a very pretty and harmonious tune, so that even I, practised as I have long been in playing the cithara, envied him. And Maia assured us that not even his nights would he pass in heaven, but from mere busybodyness he would descend as far as Hades, to steal something from thence, I suppose. He is furnished with wings, and has made for himself a sort of staff of wonderful vir-

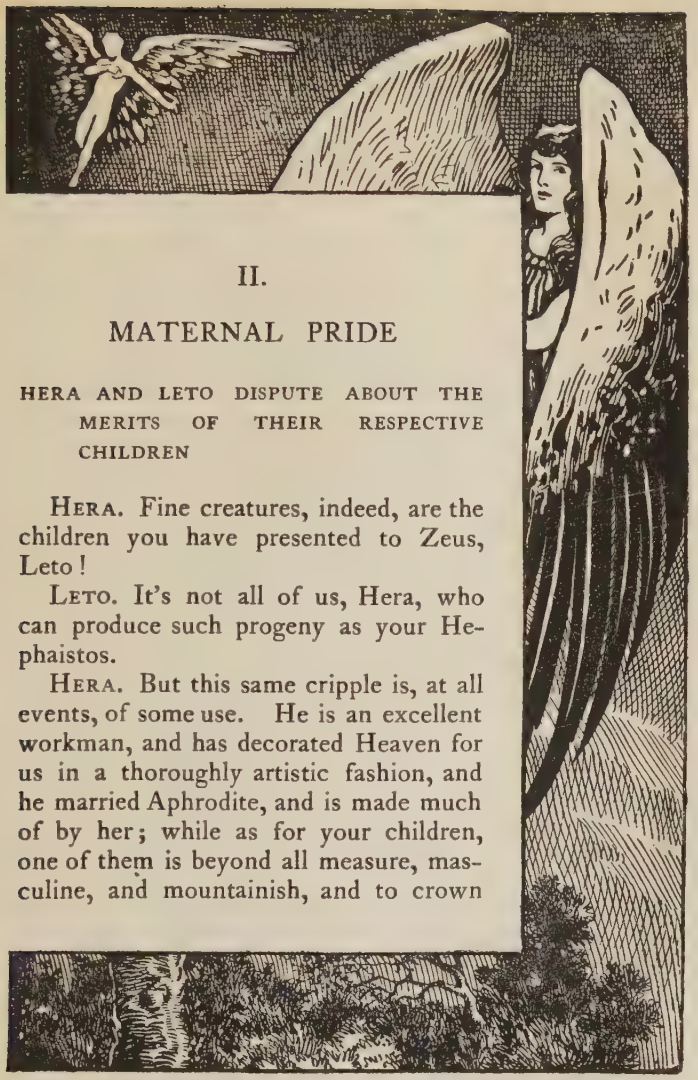


tue, with which he chaperones the souls of dead men, and conducts them down to the infernal regions.

HEPH. I gave him that for a plaything.

AP. Then he has paid you back: your fire-tongs —

HEPH. Well remembered. So I will march off to recover it, if, as you say, it is anywhere to be found among his cradle-clothes.



II.

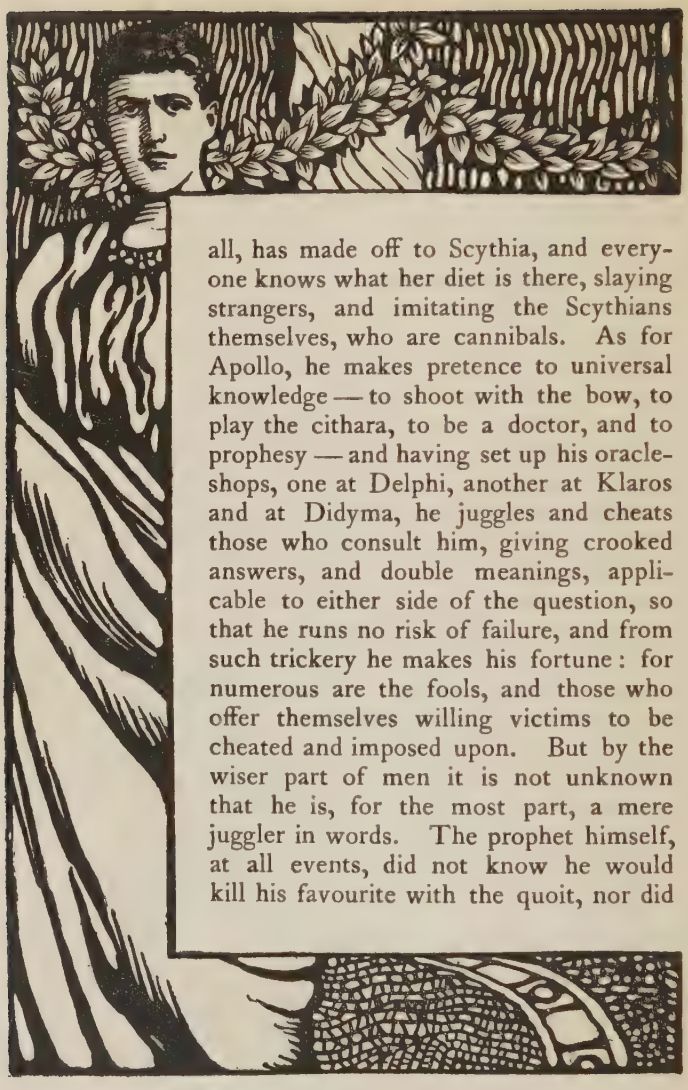
MATERNAL PRIDE

HERA AND LETO DISPUTE ABOUT THE MERITS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CHILDREN

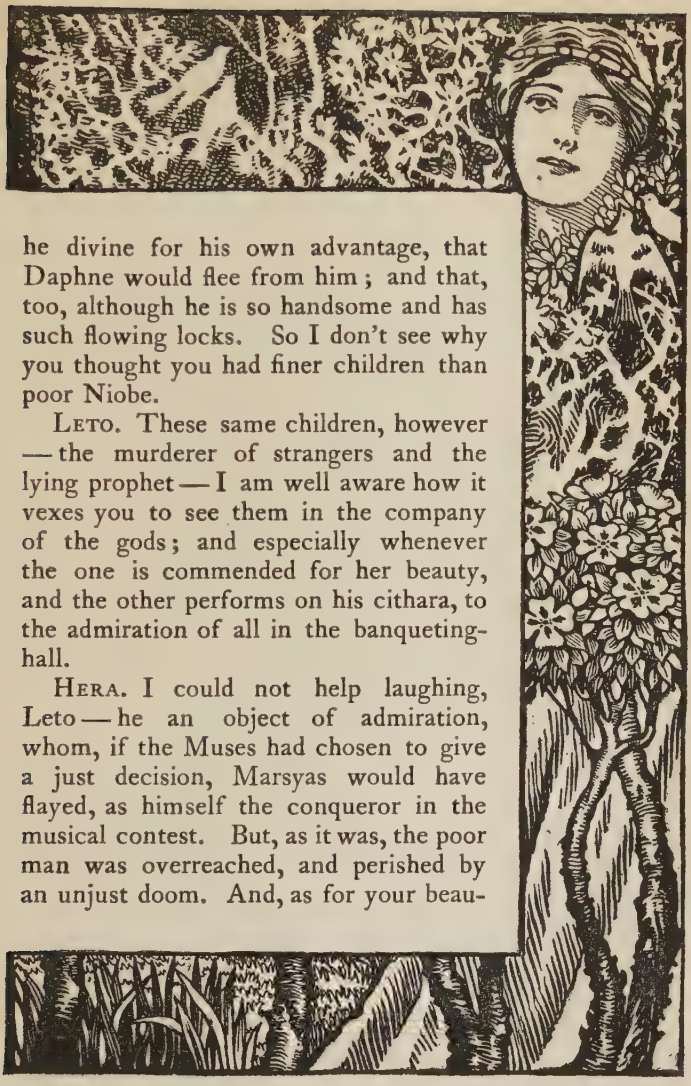
HERA. Fine creatures, indeed, are the children you have presented to Zeus, Leto!

LETO. It's not all of us, Hera, who can produce such progeny as your Hephaistos.

HERA. But this same cripple is, at all events, of some use. He is an excellent workman, and has decorated Heaven for us in a thoroughly artistic fashion, and he married Aphrodite, and is made much of by her; while as for your children, one of them is beyond all measure, masculine, and mountainish, and to crown



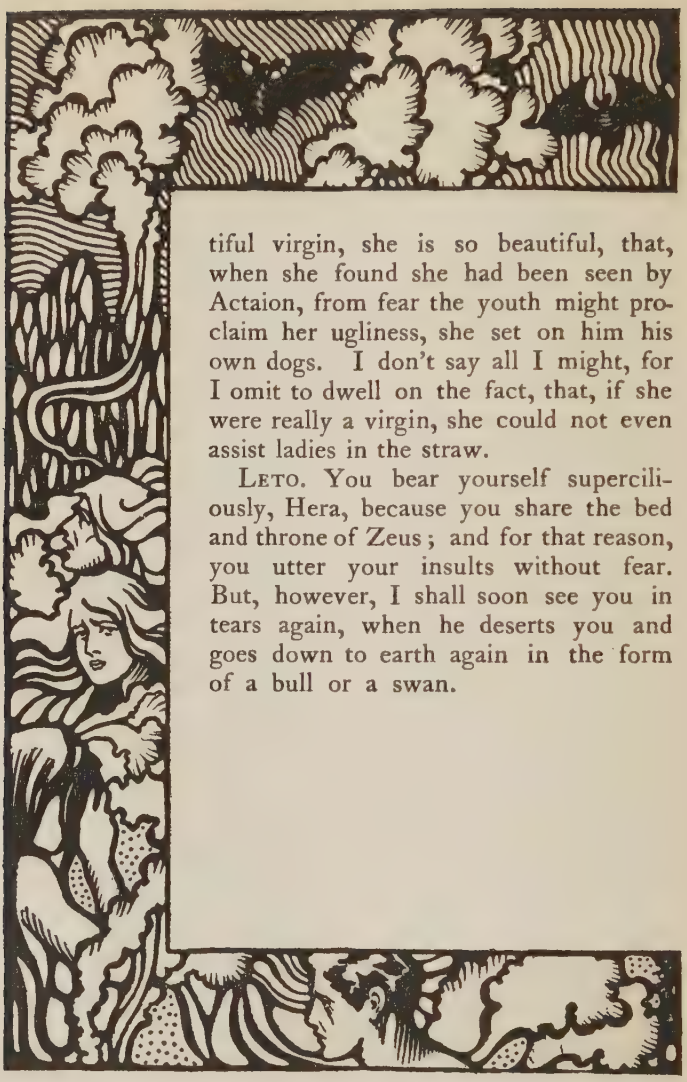
all, has made off to Scythia, and everyone knows what her diet is there, slaying strangers, and imitating the Scythians themselves, who are cannibals. As for Apollo, he makes pretence to universal knowledge — to shoot with the bow, to play the cithara, to be a doctor, and to prophesy — and having set up his oracle-shops, one at Delphi, another at Klaros and at Didyma, he juggles and cheats those who consult him, giving crooked answers, and double meanings, applicable to either side of the question, so that he runs no risk of failure, and from such trickery he makes his fortune: for numerous are the fools, and those who offer themselves willing victims to be cheated and imposed upon. But by the wiser part of men it is not unknown that he is, for the most part, a mere juggler in words. The prophet himself, at all events, did not know he would kill his favourite with the quoit, nor did



he divine for his own advantage, that Daphne would flee from him; and that, too, although he is so handsome and has such flowing locks. So I don't see why you thought you had finer children than poor Niobe.

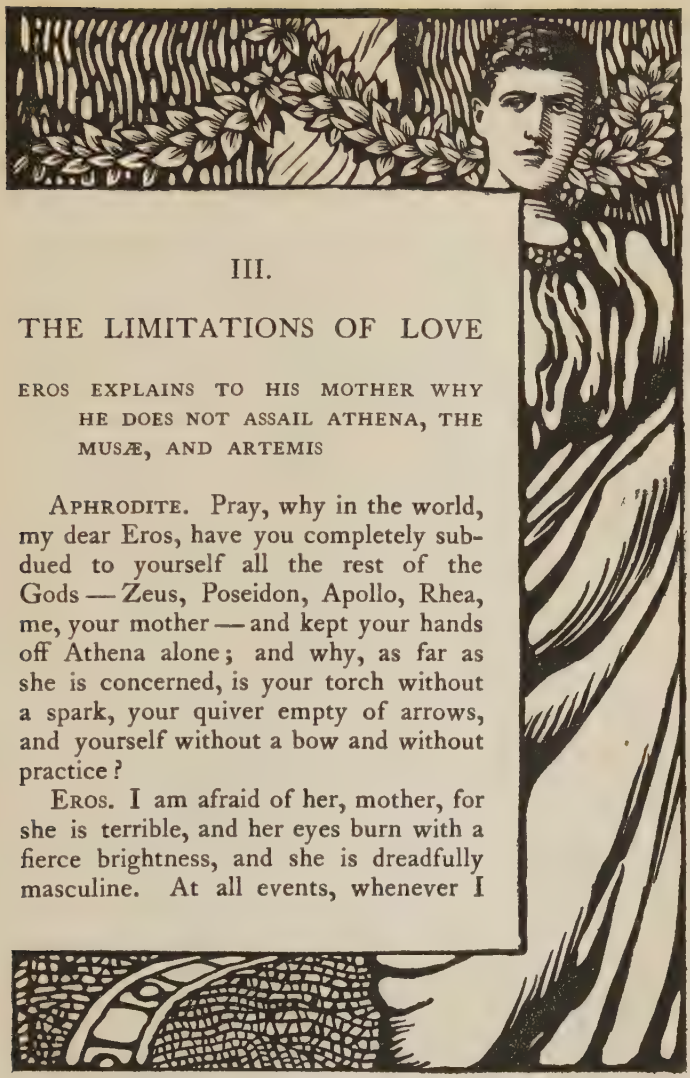
Leto. These same children, however — the murderer of strangers and the lying prophet — I am well aware how it vexes you to see them in the company of the gods; and especially whenever the one is commended for her beauty, and the other performs on his cithara, to the admiration of all in the banqueting-hall.

Hera. I could not help laughing, Leto — he an object of admiration, whom, if the Muses had chosen to give a just decision, Marsyas would have flayed, as himself the conqueror in the musical contest. But, as it was, the poor man was overreached, and perished by an unjust doom. And, as for your beau-



tiful virgin, she is so beautiful, that, when she found she had been seen by Actaion, from fear the youth might proclaim her ugliness, she set on him his own dogs. I don't say all I might, for I omit to dwell on the fact, that, if she were really a virgin, she could not even assist ladies in the straw.

LETO. You bear yourself superciliously, Hera, because you share the bed and throne of Zeus; and for that reason, you utter your insults without fear. But, however, I shall soon see you in tears again, when he deserts you and goes down to earth again in the form of a bull or a swan.



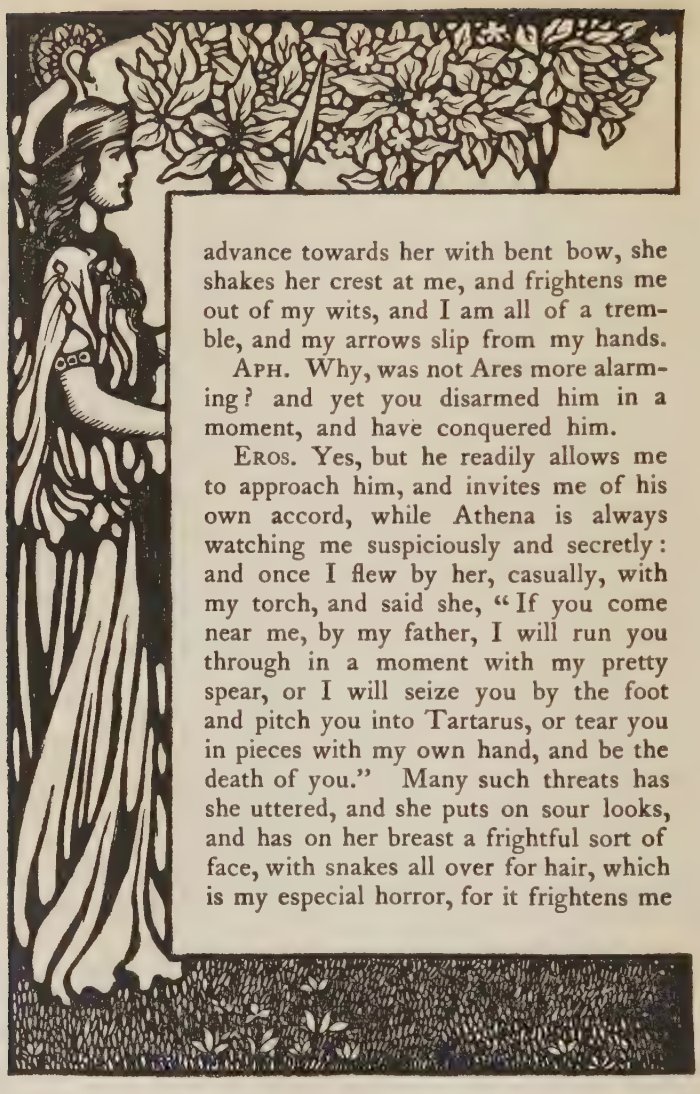
III.

THE LIMITATIONS OF LOVE

EROS EXPLAINS TO HIS MOTHER WHY HE DOES NOT ASSAIL ATHENA, THE MUSÆ, AND ARTEMIS

APHRODITE. Pray, why in the world, my dear Eros, have you completely subdued to yourself all the rest of the Gods — Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Rhea, me, your mother — and kept your hands off Athena alone; and why, as far as she is concerned, is your torch without a spark, your quiver empty of arrows, and yourself without a bow and without practice?

EROS. I am afraid of her, mother, for she is terrible, and her eyes burn with a fierce brightness, and she is dreadfully masculine. At all events, whenever I



advance towards her with bent bow, she shakes her crest at me, and frightens me out of my wits, and I am all of a tremble, and my arrows slip from my hands.

APH. Why, was not Ares more alarming? and yet you disarmed him in a moment, and have conquered him.

EROS. Yes, but he readily allows me to approach him, and invites me of his own accord, while Athena is always watching me suspiciously and secretly: and once I flew by her, casually, with my torch, and said she, "If you come near me, by my father, I will run you through in a moment with my pretty spear, or I will seize you by the foot and pitch you into Tartarus, or tear you in pieces with my own hand, and be the death of you." Many such threats has she uttered, and she puts on sour looks, and has on her breast a frightful sort of face, with snakes all over for hair, which is my especial horror, for it frightens me



like a very Mormo, and I flee whenever I catch a glimpse of it.

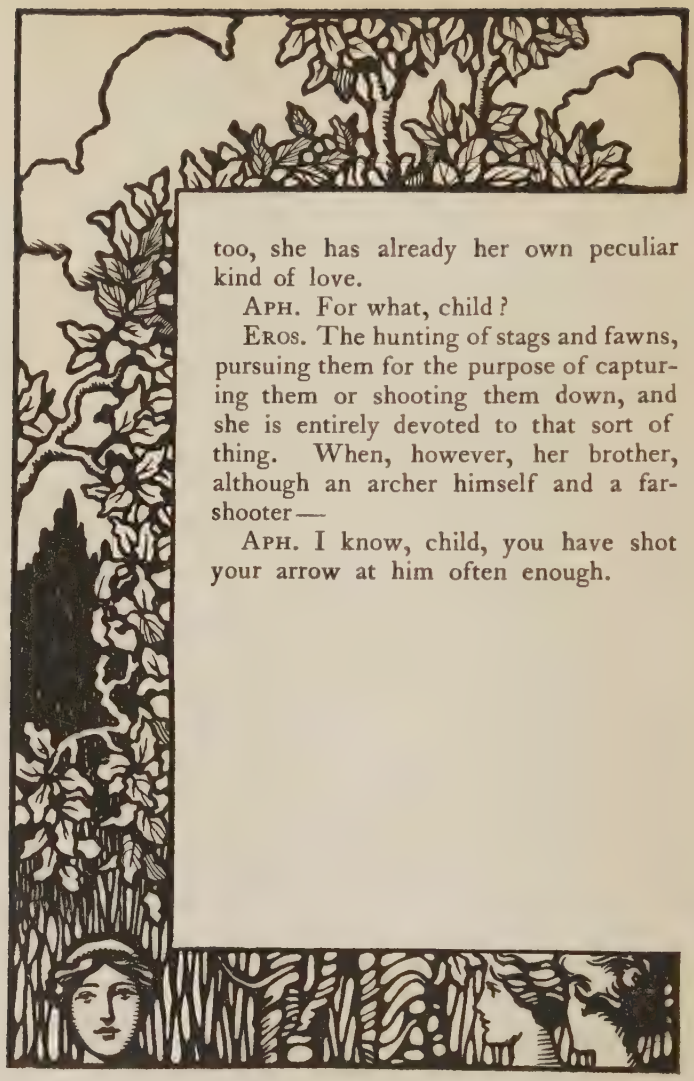
APH. But you fear Athena, as you say, and the Gorgon, and that, though you are not afraid of the thunderbolt of Zeus! And the Muses — why are they unwounded and out of reach of your darts? Do they, too, shake crests, and exhibit Gorgons in front of them?

EROS. I have an awe of them, mother, for they are grave and respectable, and are always in some profound meditation or other, and are occupied in song, and I often stand by them, beguiled by their melody.

APH. Well, leave them out of the question, too, as they are grave and respectable. But Artemis — why don't you inflict a wound on her?

EROS. In a word, it is impossible even to come up with her, as she is always fleeing through the mountains. Then,



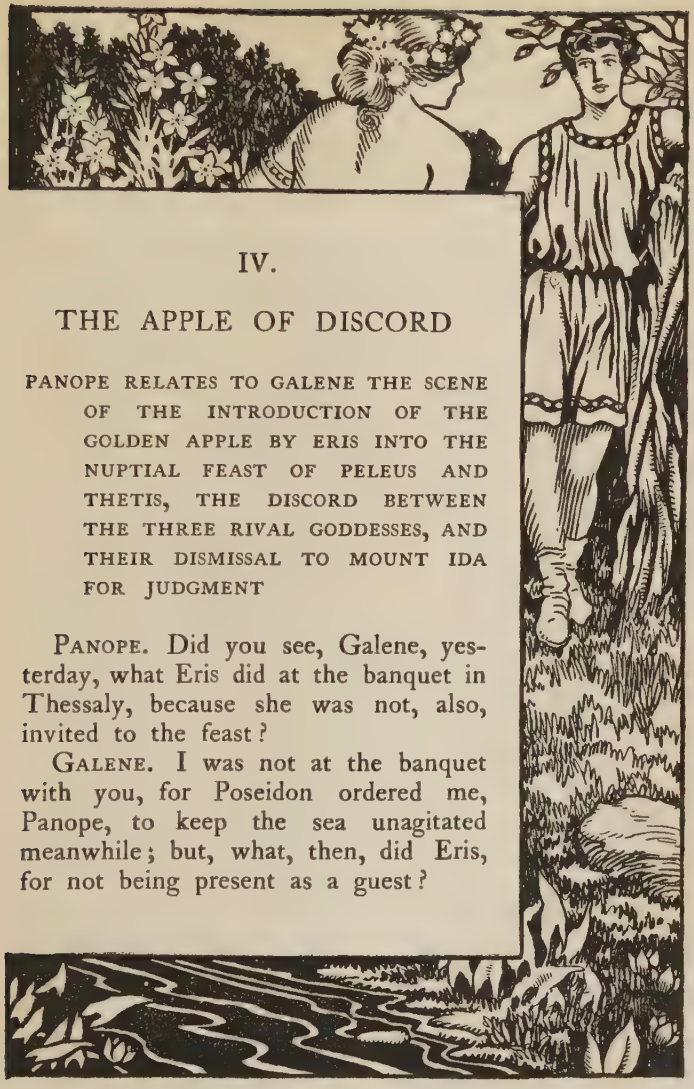


too, she has already her own peculiar kind of love.

APH. For what, child?

EROS. The hunting of stags and fawns, pursuing them for the purpose of capturing them or shooting them down, and she is entirely devoted to that sort of thing. When, however, her brother, although an archer himself and a far-shooter —

APH. I know, child, you have shot your arrow at him often enough.



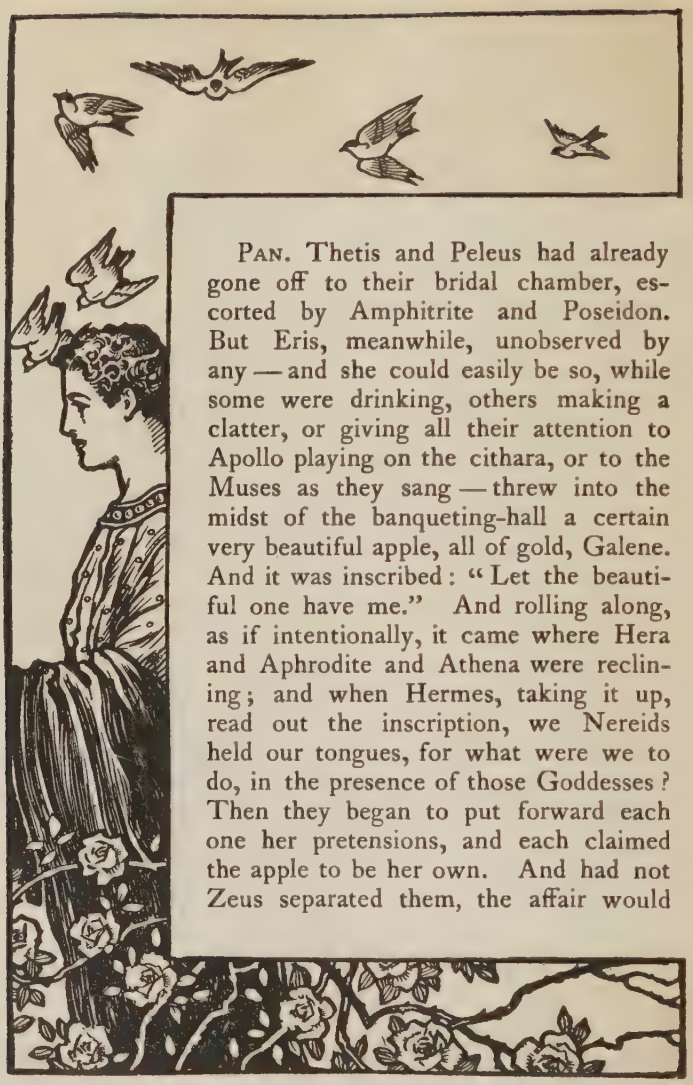
IV.

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

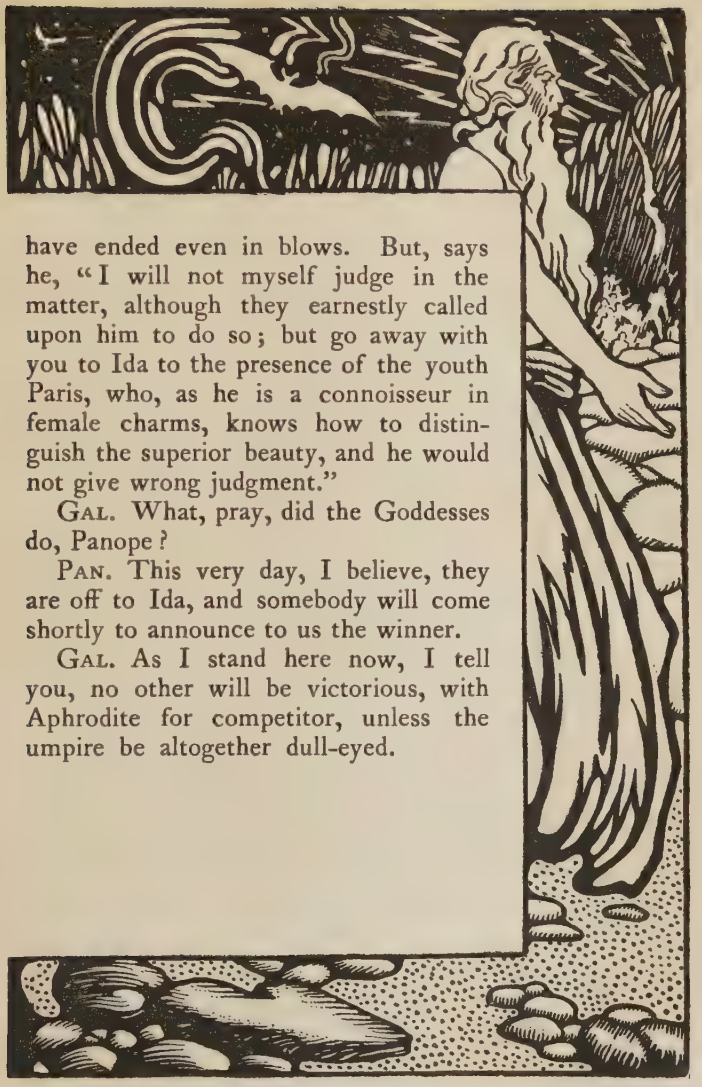
PANOPE RELATES TO GALENE THE SCENE OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GOLDEN APPLE BY ERIS INTO THE NUPTIAL FEAST OF PELEUS AND THETIS, THE DISCORD BETWEEN THE THREE RIVAL GODDESSES, AND THEIR DISMISSAL TO MOUNT IDA FOR JUDGMENT

PANOPE. Did you see, Galene, yesterday, what Eris did at the banquet in Thessaly, because she was not, also, invited to the feast?

GALENE. I was not at the banquet with you, for Poseidon ordered me, Panope, to keep the sea unagitated meanwhile; but, what, then, did Eris, for not being present as a guest?



PAN. Thetis and Peleus had already gone off to their bridal chamber, escorted by Amphitrite and Poseidon. But Eris, meanwhile, unobserved by any — and she could easily be so, while some were drinking, others making a clatter, or giving all their attention to Apollo playing on the cithara, or to the Muses as they sang — threw into the midst of the banqueting-hall a certain very beautiful apple, all of gold, Galene. And it was inscribed: "Let the beautiful one have me." And rolling along, as if intentionally, it came where Hera and Aphrodite and Athena were reclining; and when Hermes, taking it up, read out the inscription, we Nereids held our tongues, for what were we to do, in the presence of those Goddesses? Then they began to put forward each one her pretensions, and each claimed the apple to be her own. And had not Zeus separated them, the affair would

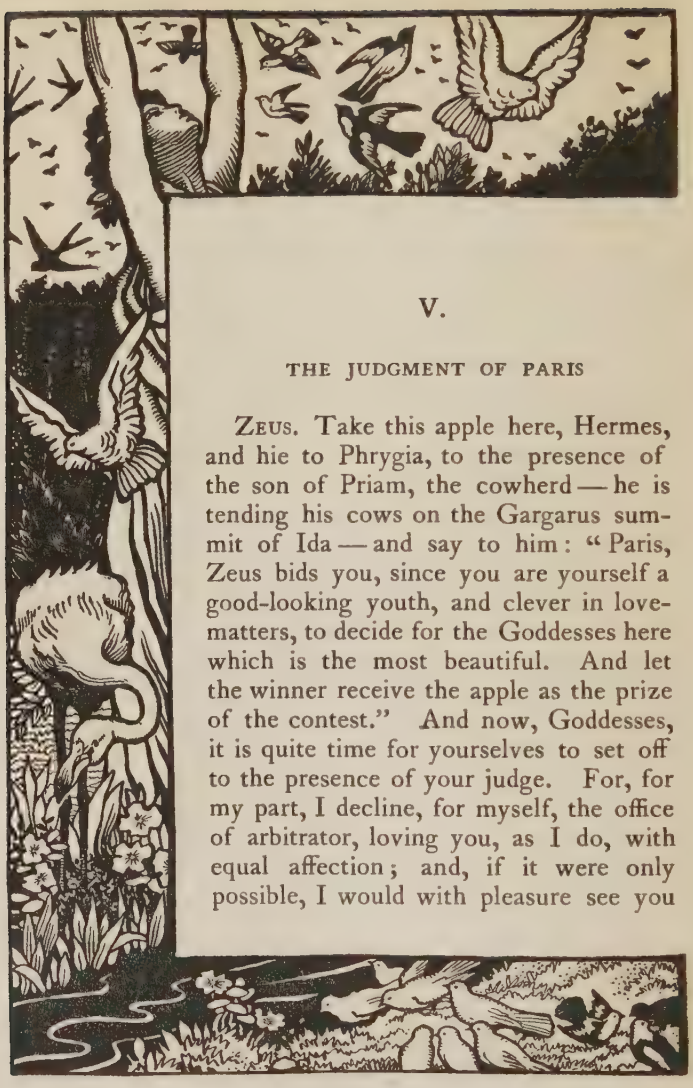


have ended even in blows. But, says he, "I will not myself judge in the matter, although they earnestly called upon him to do so; but go away with you to Ida to the presence of the youth Paris, who, as he is a connoisseur in female charms, knows how to distinguish the superior beauty, and he would not give wrong judgment."

GAL. What, pray, did the Goddesses do, Panope?

PAN. This very day, I believe, they are off to Ida, and somebody will come shortly to announce to us the winner.

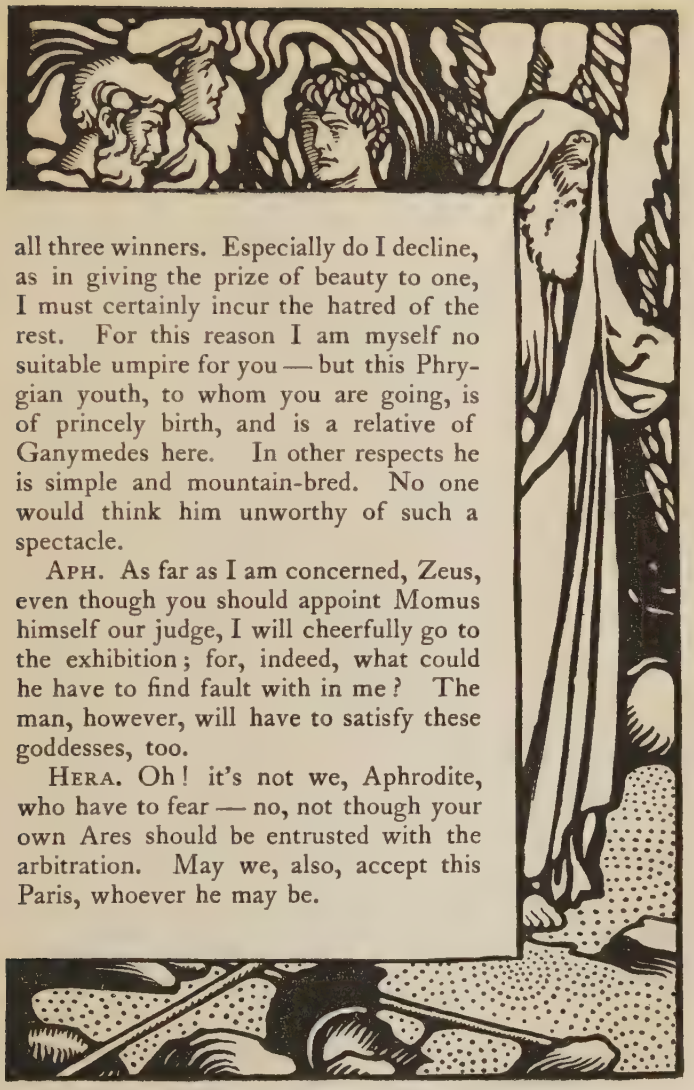
GAL. As I stand here now, I tell you, no other will be victorious, with Aphrodite for competitor, unless the umpire be altogether dull-eyed.



V.

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

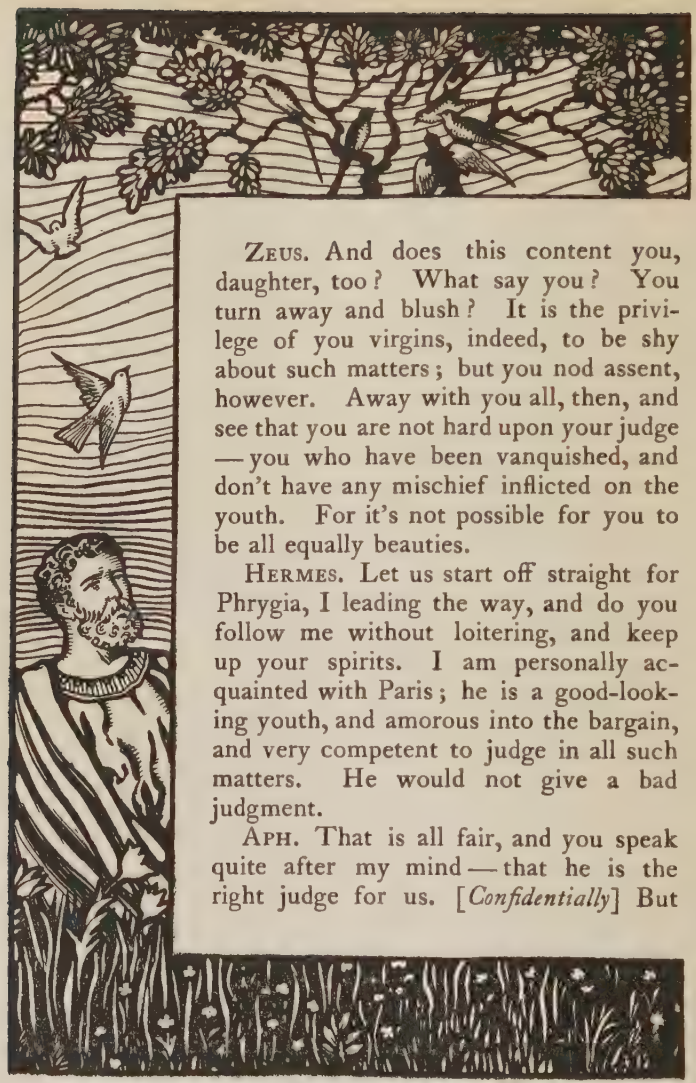
ZEUS. Take this apple here, Hermes, and hie to Phrygia, to the presence of the son of Priam, the cowherd — he is tending his cows on the Gargarus summit of Ida — and say to him: "Paris, Zeus bids you, since you are yourself a good-looking youth, and clever in love-matters, to decide for the Goddesses here which is the most beautiful. And let the winner receive the apple as the prize of the contest." And now, Goddesses, it is quite time for yourselves to set off to the presence of your judge. For, for my part, I decline, for myself, the office of arbitrator, loving you, as I do, with equal affection; and, if it were only possible, I would with pleasure see you



all three winners. Especially do I decline, as in giving the prize of beauty to one, I must certainly incur the hatred of the rest. For this reason I am myself no suitable umpire for you — but this Phrygian youth, to whom you are going, is of princely birth, and is a relative of Ganymedes here. In other respects he is simple and mountain-bred. No one would think him unworthy of such a spectacle.

APH. As far as I am concerned, Zeus, even though you should appoint Momus himself our judge, I will cheerfully go to the exhibition; for, indeed, what could he have to find fault with in me? The man, however, will have to satisfy these goddesses, too.

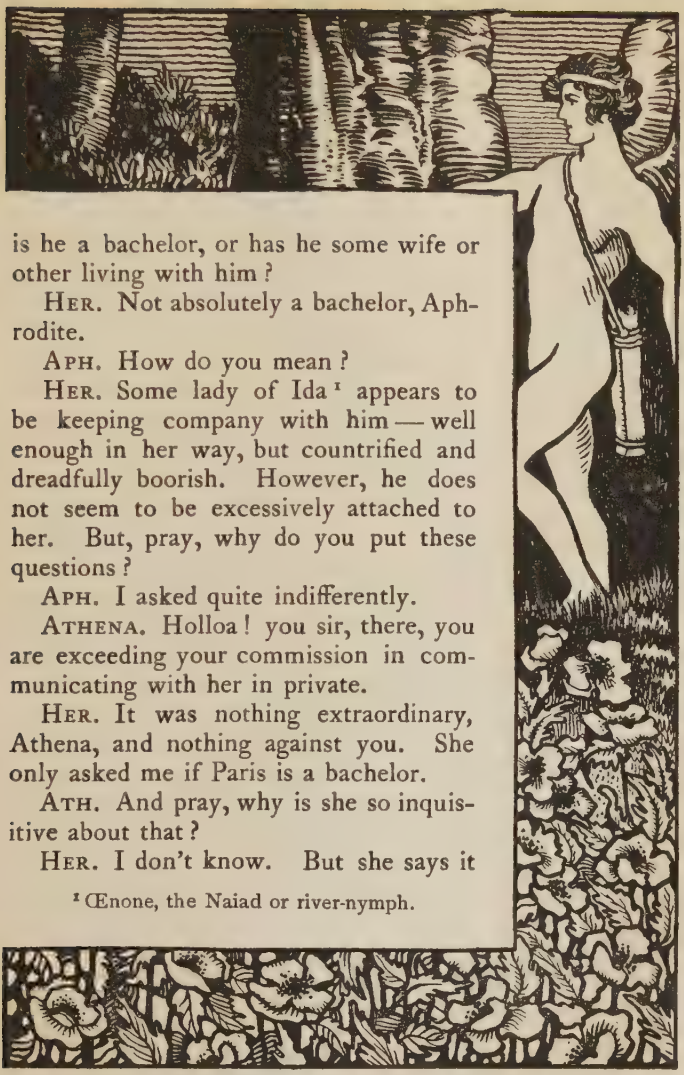
HERA. Oh! it's not we, Aphrodite, who have to fear — no, not though your own Ares should be entrusted with the arbitration. May we, also, accept this Paris, whoever he may be.



ZEUS. And does this content you, daughter, too? What say you? You turn away and blush? It is the privilege of you virgins, indeed, to be shy about such matters; but you nod assent, however. Away with you all, then, and see that you are not hard upon your judge — you who have been vanquished, and don't have any mischief inflicted on the youth. For it's not possible for you to be all equally beauties.

HERMES. Let us start off straight for Phrygia, I leading the way, and do you follow me without loitering, and keep up your spirits. I am personally acquainted with Paris; he is a good-looking youth, and amorous into the bargain, and very competent to judge in all such matters. He would not give a bad judgment.

APH. That is all fair, and you speak quite after my mind — that he is the right judge for us. [*Confidentially*] But



is he a bachelor, or has he some wife or other living with him?

HER. Not absolutely a bachelor, Aphrodite.

APH. How do you mean?

HER. Some lady of Ida[1] appears to be keeping company with him — well enough in her way, but countrified and dreadfully boorish. However, he does not seem to be excessively attached to her. But, pray, why do you put these questions?

APH. I asked quite indifferently.

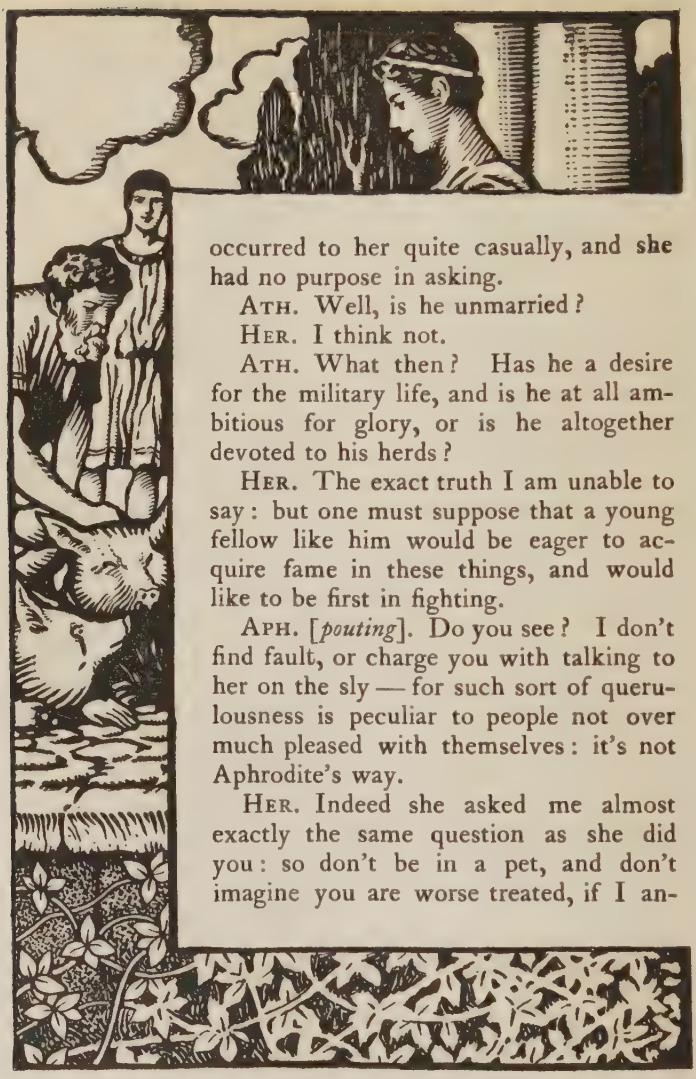
ATHENA. Holloa! you sir, there, you are exceeding your commission in communicating with her in private.

HER. It was nothing extraordinary, Athena, and nothing against you. She only asked me if Paris is a bachelor.

ATH. And pray, why is she so inquisitive about that?

HER. I don't know. But she says it

[1] Œnone, the Naiad or river-nymph.



occurred to her quite casually, and she had no purpose in asking.

ATH. Well, is he unmarried?

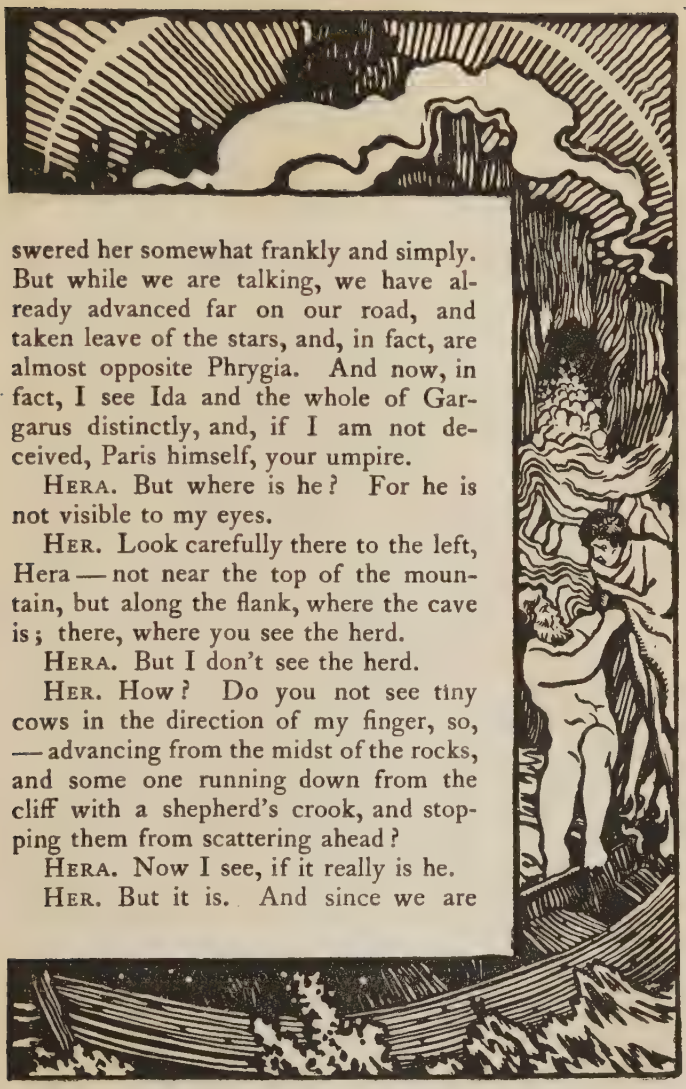
HER. I think not.

ATH. What then? Has he a desire for the military life, and is he at all ambitious for glory, or is he altogether devoted to his herds?

HER. The exact truth I am unable to say: but one must suppose that a young fellow like him would be eager to acquire fame in these things, and would like to be first in fighting.

APH. [*pouting*]. Do you see? I don't find fault, or charge you with talking to her on the sly — for such sort of querulousness is peculiar to people not over much pleased with themselves: it's not Aphrodite's way.

HER. Indeed she asked me almost exactly the same question as she did you: so don't be in a pet, and don't imagine you are worse treated, if I an-



swered her somewhat frankly and simply. But while we are talking, we have already advanced far on our road, and taken leave of the stars, and, in fact, are almost opposite Phrygia. And now, in fact, I see Ida and the whole of Gargarus distinctly, and, if I am not deceived, Paris himself, your umpire.

HERA. But where is he? For he is not visible to my eyes.

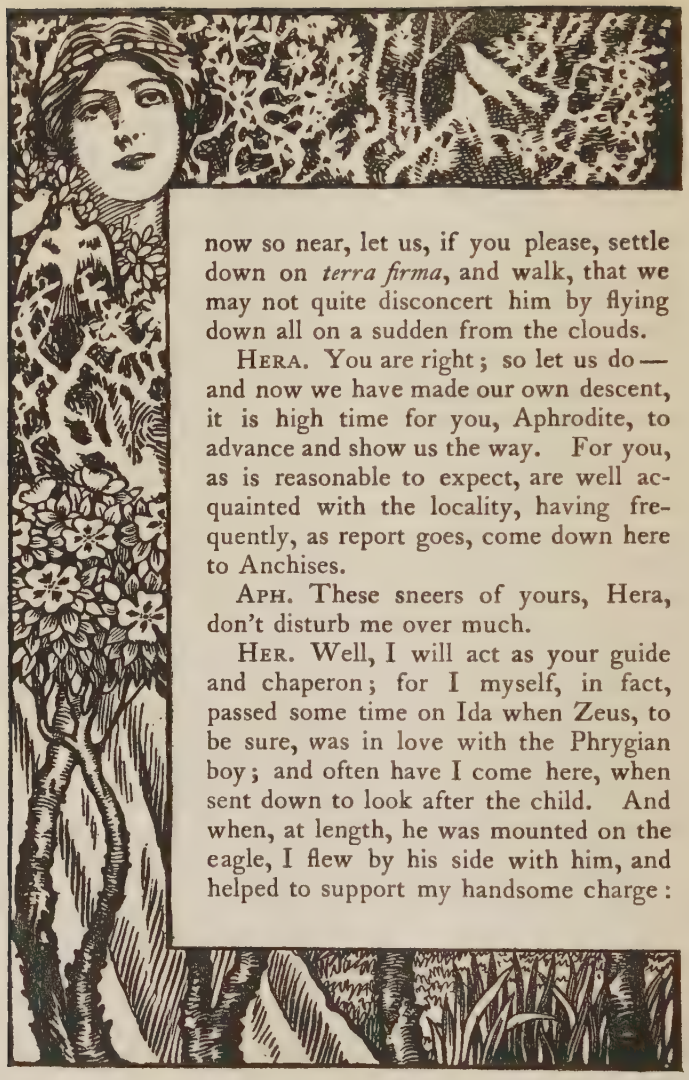
HER. Look carefully there to the left, Hera — not near the top of the mountain, but along the flank, where the cave is; there, where you see the herd.

HERA. But I don't see the herd.

HER. How? Do you not see tiny cows in the direction of my finger, so, — advancing from the midst of the rocks, and some one running down from the cliff with a shepherd's crook, and stopping them from scattering ahead?

HERA. Now I see, if it really is he.

HER. But it is. And since we are

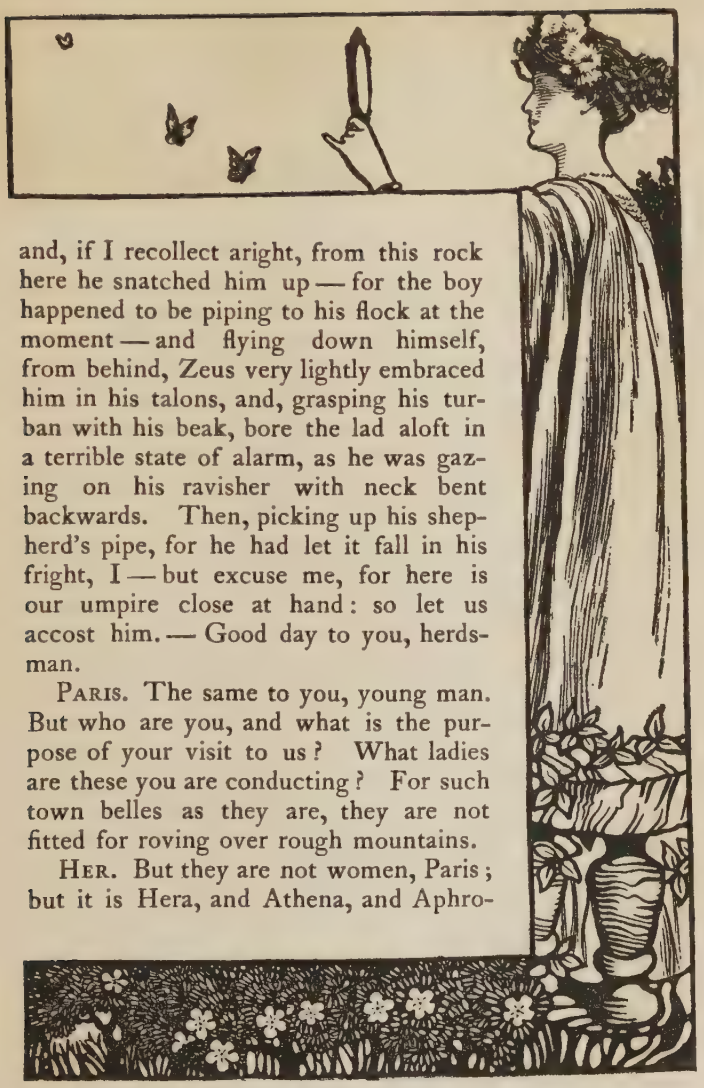


now so near, let us, if you please, settle down on *terra firma*, and walk, that we may not quite disconcert him by flying down all on a sudden from the clouds.

HERA. You are right; so let us do — and now we have made our own descent, it is high time for you, Aphrodite, to advance and show us the way. For you, as is reasonable to expect, are well acquainted with the locality, having frequently, as report goes, come down here to Anchises.

APH. These sneers of yours, Hera, don't disturb me over much.

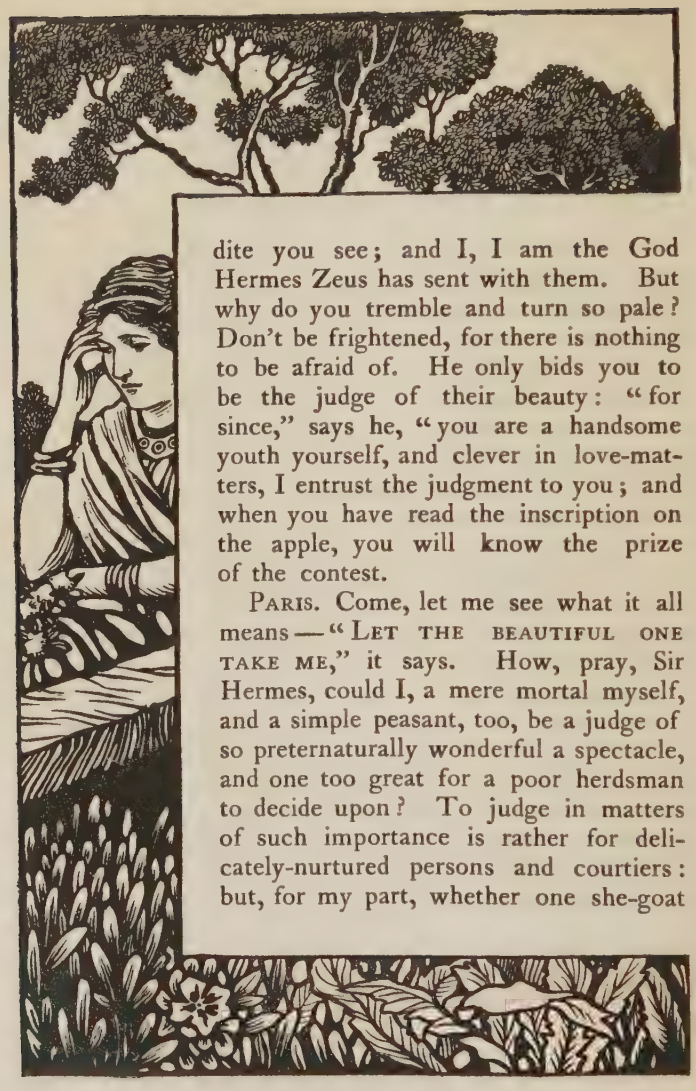
HER. Well, I will act as your guide and chaperon; for I myself, in fact, passed some time on Ida when Zeus, to be sure, was in love with the Phrygian boy; and often have I come here, when sent down to look after the child. And when, at length, he was mounted on the eagle, I flew by his side with him, and helped to support my handsome charge:



and, if I recollect aright, from this rock here he snatched him up — for the boy happened to be piping to his flock at the moment — and flying down himself, from behind, Zeus very lightly embraced him in his talons, and, grasping his turban with his beak, bore the lad aloft in a terrible state of alarm, as he was gazing on his ravisher with neck bent backwards. Then, picking up his shepherd's pipe, for he had let it fall in his fright, I — but excuse me, for here is our umpire close at hand: so let us accost him. — Good day to you, herdsman.

PARIS. The same to you, young man. But who are you, and what is the purpose of your visit to us? What ladies are these you are conducting? For such town belles as they are, they are not fitted for roving over rough mountains.

HER. But they are not women, Paris; but it is Hera, and Athena, and Aphro-



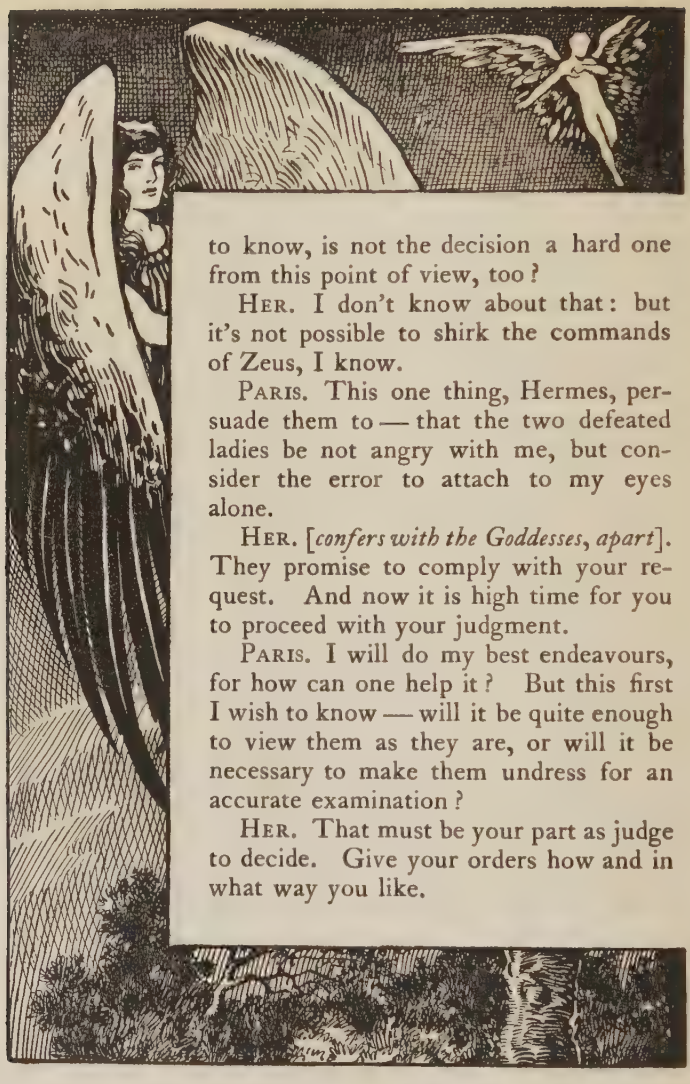
dite you see; and I, I am the God Hermes Zeus has sent with them. But why do you tremble and turn so pale? Don't be frightened, for there is nothing to be afraid of. He only bids you to be the judge of their beauty: "for since," says he, "you are a handsome youth yourself, and clever in love-matters, I entrust the judgment to you; and when you have read the inscription on the apple, you will know the prize of the contest.

PARIS. Come, let me see what it all means — "LET THE BEAUTIFUL ONE TAKE ME," it says. How, pray, Sir Hermes, could I, a mere mortal myself, and a simple peasant, too, be a judge of so preternaturally wonderful a spectacle, and one too great for a poor herdsman to decide upon? To judge in matters of such importance is rather for delicately-nurtured persons and courtiers: but, for my part, whether one she-goat



be more beautiful than another she-goat, or one heifer surpasses another heifer in beauty I could perhaps decide *secundum artem*. But these ladies are all equally beautiful, and I don't know how a man could wrench away his gaze and transfer it from the one to the other; for it will not easily unfix itself, but where it first rests, to that part it clings, and commends what's immediately before it. And even though it pass on to another part, that too it sees to be beautiful, and lingers, and is caught by the adjoining charms; and, in short, their beauty has circumfused itself about me, and wholly taken possession of me, and I am vexed that I, too, cannot, like Argus, see with all my body. I think I should judge fairly, if I give the apple to all: for, indeed, there is this difficulty besides; it happens that this lady is the sister and wife of Zeus, and that these are his daughters. How, I should like





to know, is not the decision a hard one from this point of view, too?

HER. I don't know about that: but it's not possible to shirk the commands of Zeus, I know.

PARIS. This one thing, Hermes, persuade them to — that the two defeated ladies be not angry with me, but consider the error to attach to my eyes alone.

HER. [*confers with the Goddesses, apart*]. They promise to comply with your request. And now it is high time for you to proceed with your judgment.

PARIS. I will do my best endeavours, for how can one help it? But this first I wish to know — will it be quite enough to view them as they are, or will it be necessary to make them undress for an accurate examination?

HER. That must be your part as judge to decide. Give your orders how and in what way you like.



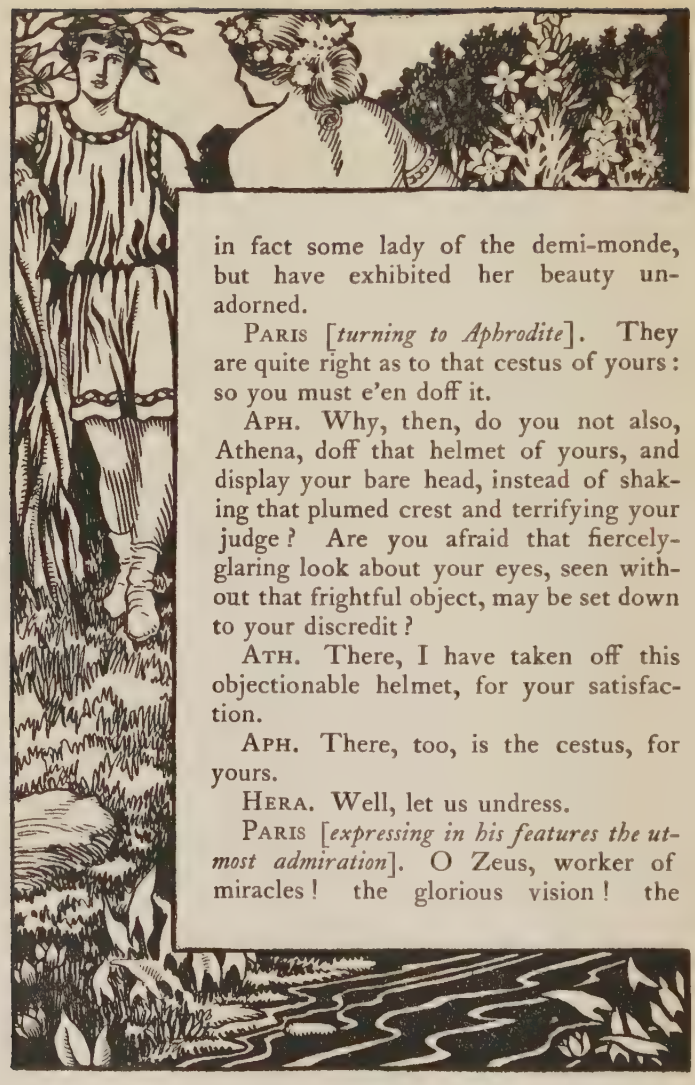
PARIS. How I like, really? I wish to see them undressed.

HER. Ho, you ladies there, off with your clothes. [*To Paris*] For your part make a thorough survey — as for me, I avert my face at once.

HERA. Very well said, Paris, and I will be the first to undress, that you may perceive that I have not only "white arms," and that I am not proud of having "cow's-eyes" only, but that I am equally and proportionally beautiful all over.

PARIS. Off with your clothes, too, Aphrodite.

ATH. Don't let her undress, Paris, before she lays aside her cestus — for she is an enchantress — for fear she may bewitch you by its means. Indeed, she ought not either to have appeared here so meretriciously tricked out, nor painted up with so many dyes and cosmetics for all the world as if she were



in fact some lady of the demi-monde, but have exhibited her beauty unadorned.

PARIS [*turning to Aphrodite*]. They are quite right as to that cestus of yours: so you must e'en doff it.

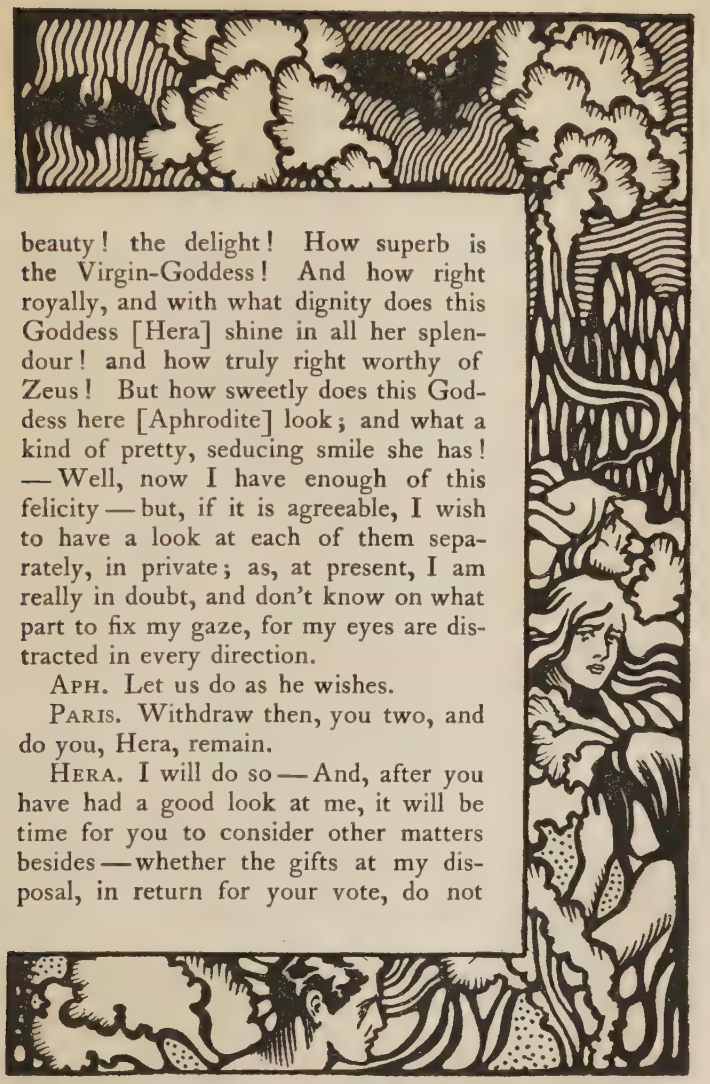
APH. Why, then, do you not also, Athena, doff that helmet of yours, and display your bare head, instead of shaking that plumed crest and terrifying your judge? Are you afraid that fiercely-glaring look about your eyes, seen without that frightful object, may be set down to your discredit?

ATH. There, I have taken off this objectionable helmet, for your satisfaction.

APH. There, too, is the cestus, for yours.

HERA. Well, let us undress.

PARIS [*expressing in his features the utmost admiration*]. O Zeus, worker of miracles! the glorious vision! the

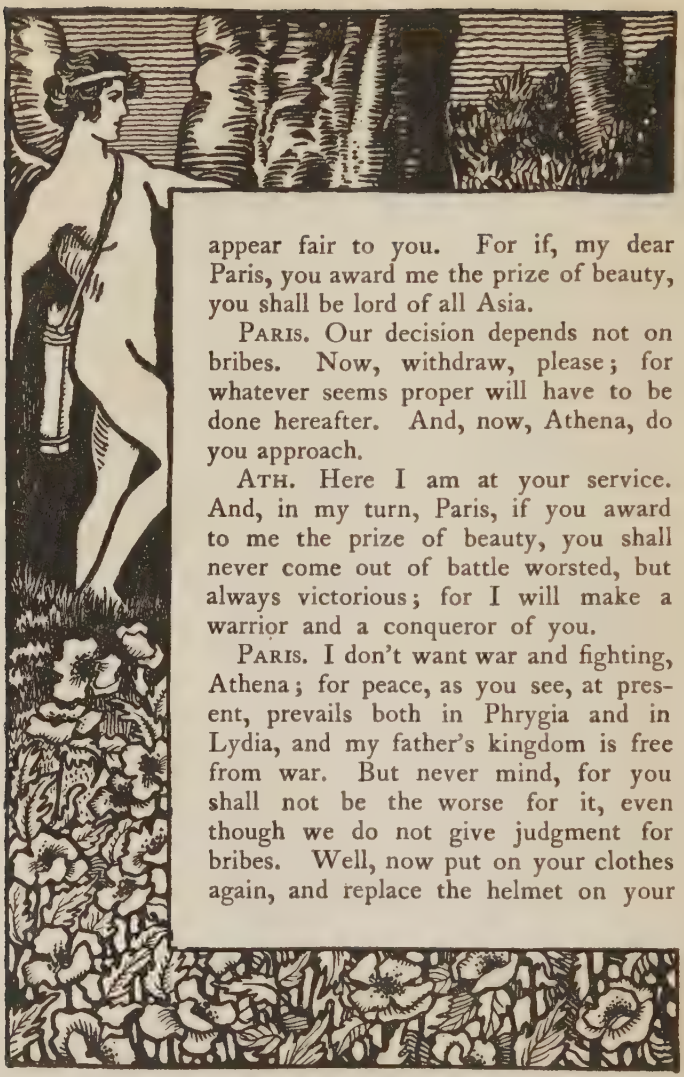


beauty! the delight! How superb is the Virgin-Goddess! And how right royally, and with what dignity does this Goddess [Hera] shine in all her splendour! and how truly right worthy of Zeus! But how sweetly does this Goddess here [Aphrodite] look; and what a kind of pretty, seducing smile she has! — Well, now I have enough of this felicity — but, if it is agreeable, I wish to have a look at each of them separately, in private; as, at present, I am really in doubt, and don't know on what part to fix my gaze, for my eyes are distracted in every direction.

APH. Let us do as he wishes.

PARIS. Withdraw then, you two, and do you, Hera, remain.

HERA. I will do so — And, after you have had a good look at me, it will be time for you to consider other matters besides — whether the gifts at my disposal, in return for your vote, do not

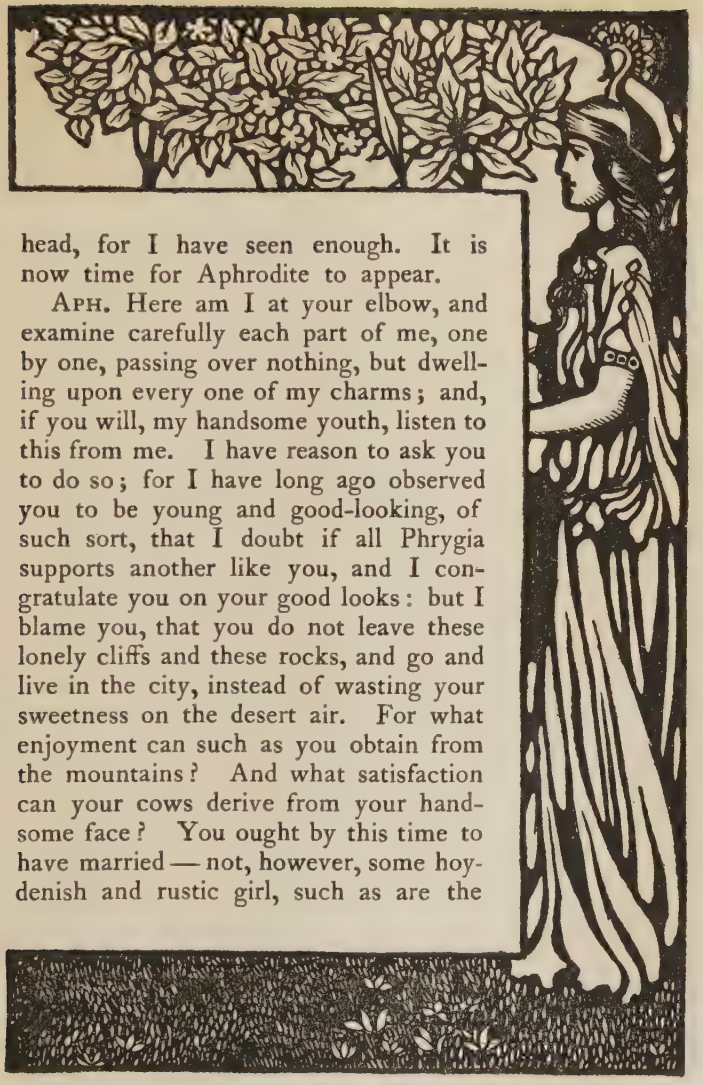


appear fair to you. For if, my dear Paris, you award me the prize of beauty, you shall be lord of all Asia.

PARIS. Our decision depends not on bribes. Now, withdraw, please; for whatever seems proper will have to be done hereafter. And, now, Athena, do you approach.

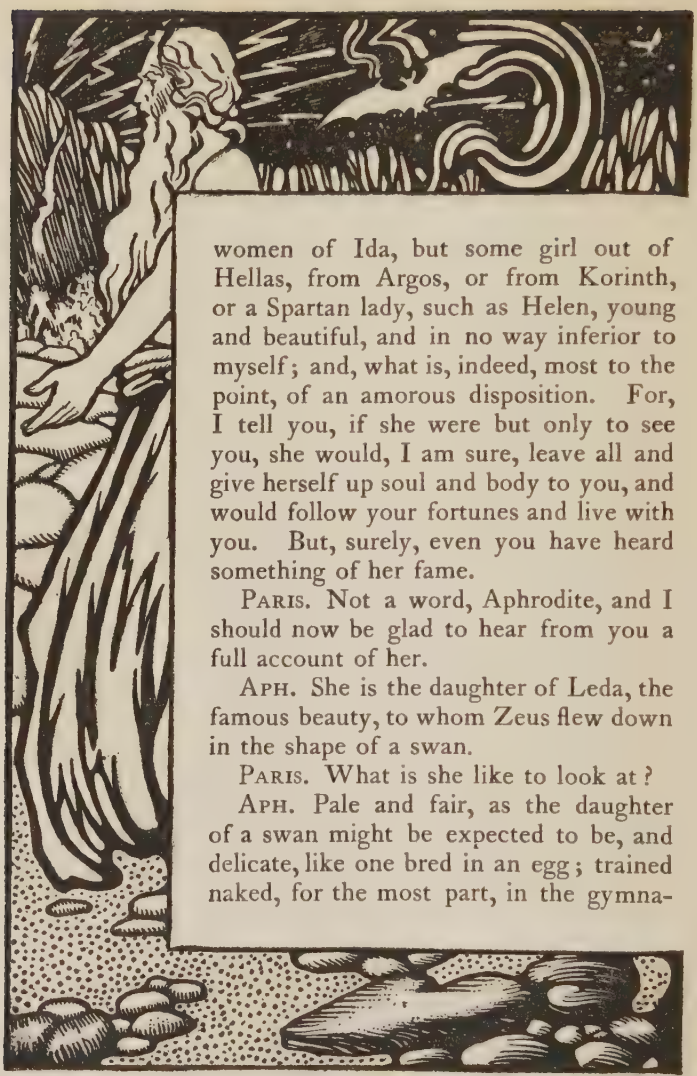
ATH. Here I am at your service. And, in my turn, Paris, if you award to me the prize of beauty, you shall never come out of battle worsted, but always victorious; for I will make a warrior and a conqueror of you.

PARIS. I don't want war and fighting, Athena; for peace, as you see, at present, prevails both in Phrygia and in Lydia, and my father's kingdom is free from war. But never mind, for you shall not be the worse for it, even though we do not give judgment for bribes. Well, now put on your clothes again, and replace the helmet on your



head, for I have seen enough. It is now time for Aphrodite to appear.

Aph. Here am I at your elbow, and examine carefully each part of me, one by one, passing over nothing, but dwelling upon every one of my charms; and, if you will, my handsome youth, listen to this from me. I have reason to ask you to do so; for I have long ago observed you to be young and good-looking, of such sort, that I doubt if all Phrygia supports another like you, and I congratulate you on your good looks: but I blame you, that you do not leave these lonely cliffs and these rocks, and go and live in the city, instead of wasting your sweetness on the desert air. For what enjoyment can such as you obtain from the mountains? And what satisfaction can your cows derive from your handsome face? You ought by this time to have married — not, however, some hoydenish and rustic girl, such as are the



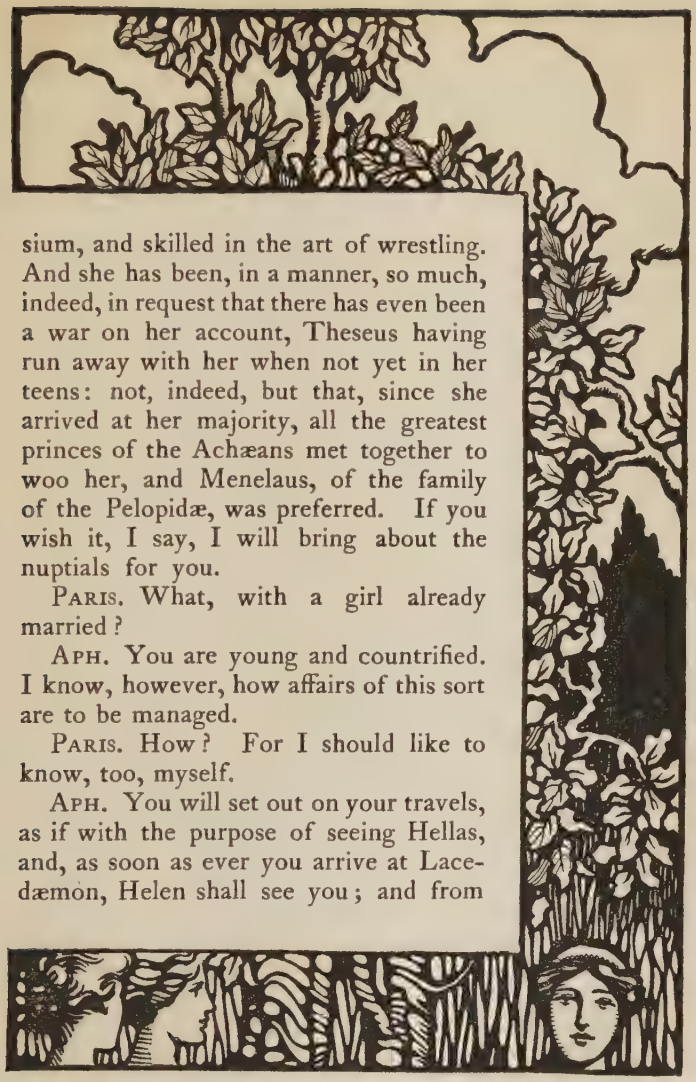
women of Ida, but some girl out of Hellas, from Argos, or from Korinth, or a Spartan lady, such as Helen, young and beautiful, and in no way inferior to myself; and, what is, indeed, most to the point, of an amorous disposition. For, I tell you, if she were but only to see you, she would, I am sure, leave all and give herself up soul and body to you, and would follow your fortunes and live with you. But, surely, even you have heard something of her fame.

PARIS. Not a word, Aphrodite, and I should now be glad to hear from you a full account of her.

APH. She is the daughter of Leda, the famous beauty, to whom Zeus flew down in the shape of a swan.

PARIS. What is she like to look at?

APH. Pale and fair, as the daughter of a swan might be expected to be, and delicate, like one bred in an egg; trained naked, for the most part, in the gymna-



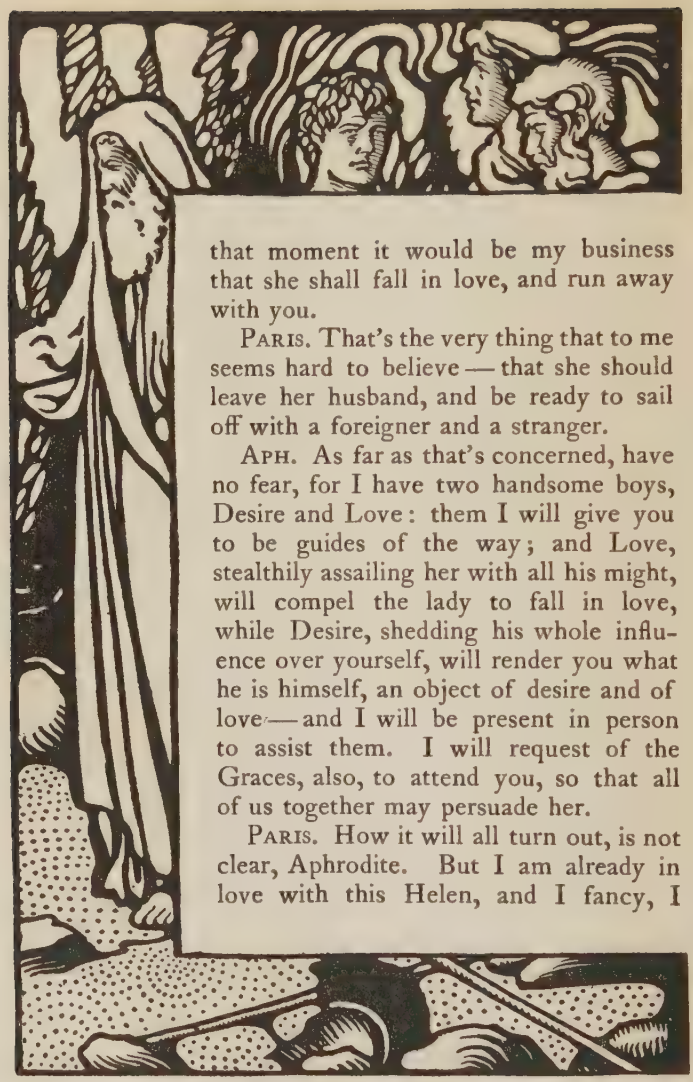
sium, and skilled in the art of wrestling. And she has been, in a manner, so much, indeed, in request that there has even been a war on her account, Theseus having run away with her when not yet in her teens: not, indeed, but that, since she arrived at her majority, all the greatest princes of the Achæans met together to woo her, and Menelaus, of the family of the Pelopidæ, was preferred. If you wish it, I say, I will bring about the nuptials for you.

PARIS. What, with a girl already married?

APH. You are young and countrified. I know, however, how affairs of this sort are to be managed.

PARIS. How? For I should like to know, too, myself.

APH. You will set out on your travels, as if with the purpose of seeing Hellas, and, as soon as ever you arrive at Lacedæmon, Helen shall see you; and from

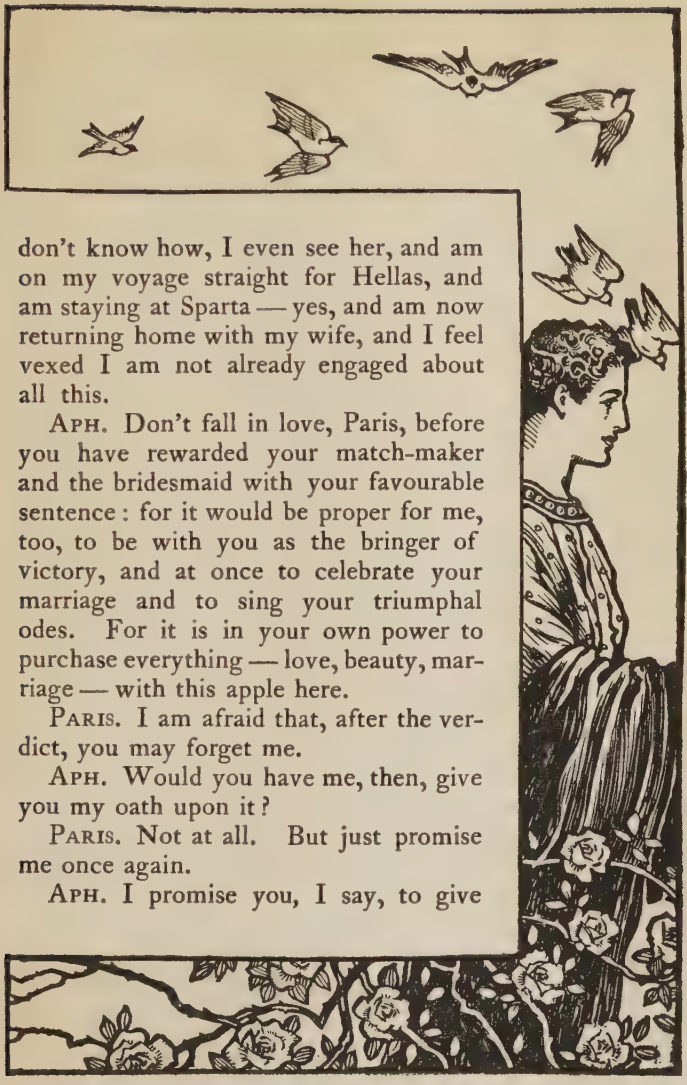


that moment it would be my business that she shall fall in love, and run away with you.

PARIS. That's the very thing that to me seems hard to believe — that she should leave her husband, and be ready to sail off with a foreigner and a stranger.

APH. As far as that's concerned, have no fear, for I have two handsome boys, Desire and Love: them I will give you to be guides of the way; and Love, stealthily assailing her with all his might, will compel the lady to fall in love, while Desire, shedding his whole influence over yourself, will render you what he is himself, an object of desire and of love — and I will be present in person to assist them. I will request of the Graces, also, to attend you, so that all of us together may persuade her.

PARIS. How it will all turn out, is not clear, Aphrodite. But I am already in love with this Helen, and I fancy, I



don't know how, I even see her, and am on my voyage straight for Hellas, and am staying at Sparta — yes, and am now returning home with my wife, and I feel vexed I am not already engaged about all this.

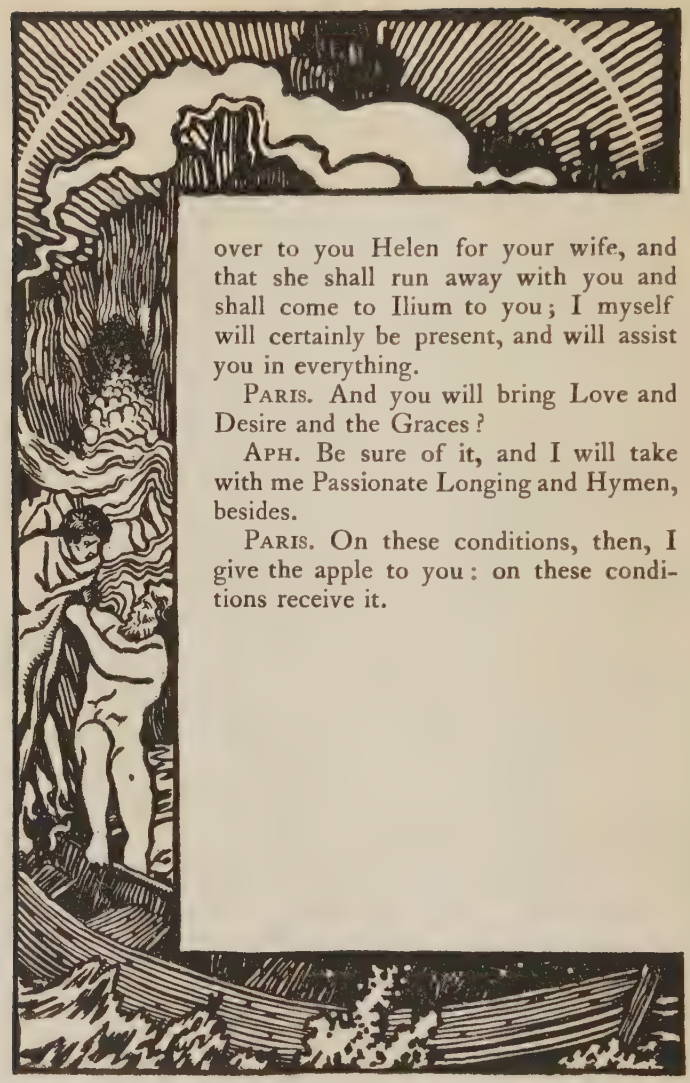
APH. Don't fall in love, Paris, before you have rewarded your match-maker and the bridesmaid with your favourable sentence: for it would be proper for me, too, to be with you as the bringer of victory, and at once to celebrate your marriage and to sing your triumphal odes. For it is in your own power to purchase everything — love, beauty, marriage — with this apple here.

PARIS. I am afraid that, after the verdict, you may forget me.

APH. Would you have me, then, give you my oath upon it?

PARIS. Not at all. But just promise me once again.

APH. I promise you, I say, to give

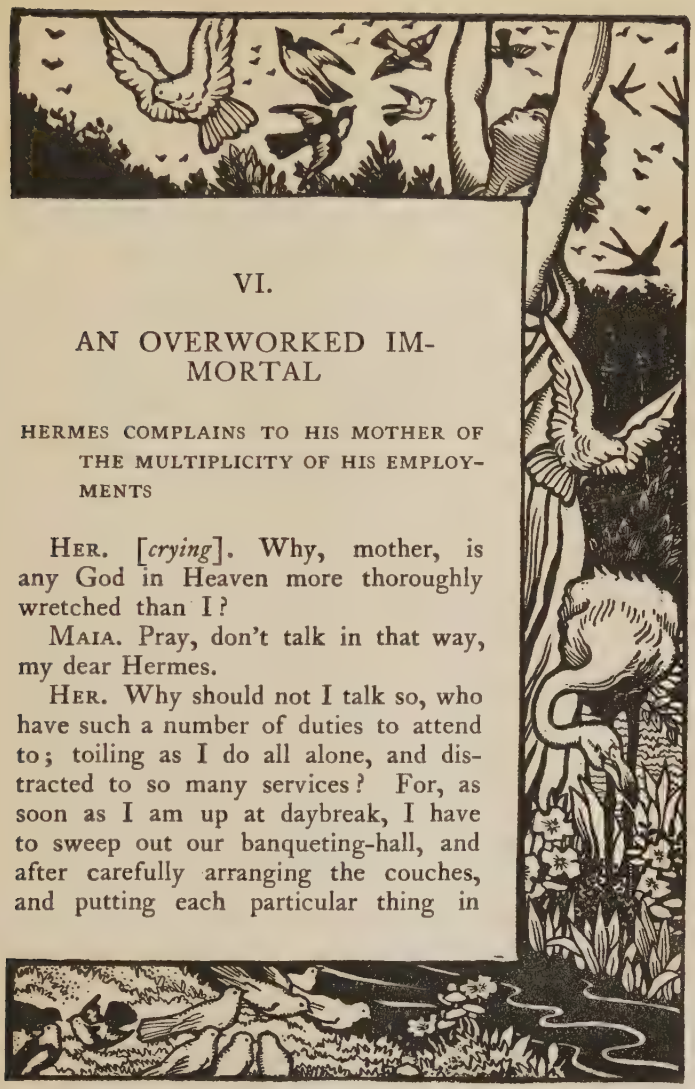


over to you Helen for your wife, and that she shall run away with you and shall come to Ilium to you; I myself will certainly be present, and will assist you in everything.

PARIS. And you will bring Love and Desire and the Graces?

APH. Be sure of it, and I will take with me Passionate Longing and Hymen, besides.

PARIS. On these conditions, then, I give the apple to you: on these conditions receive it.



VI.

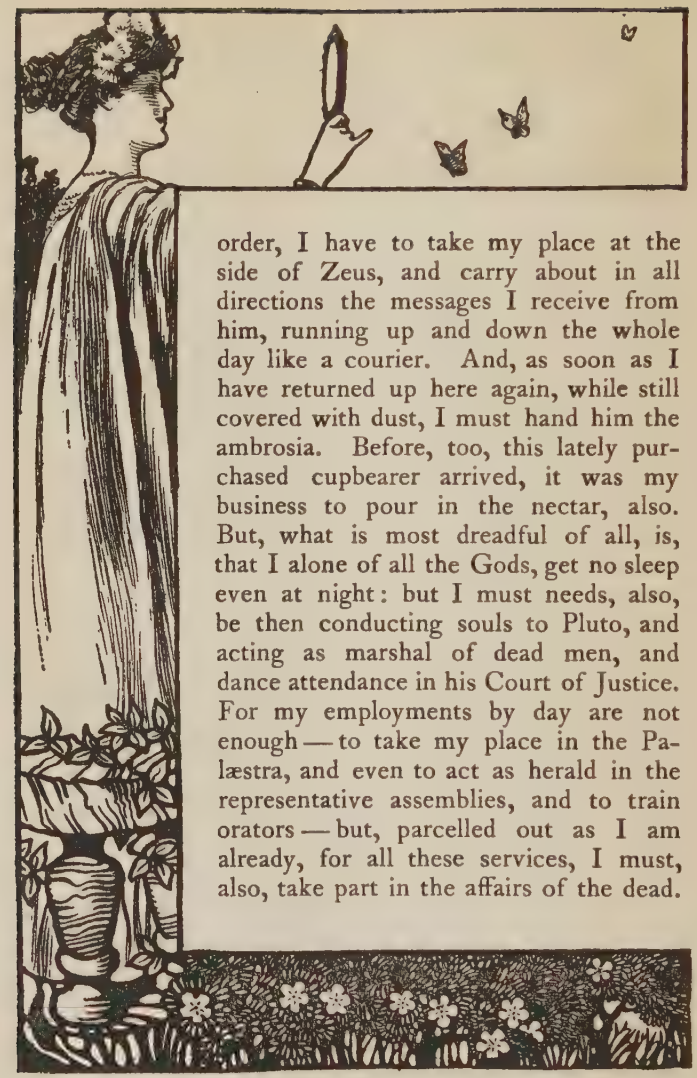
AN OVERWORKED IMMORTAL

HERMES COMPLAINS TO HIS MOTHER OF THE MULTIPLICITY OF HIS EMPLOYMENTS

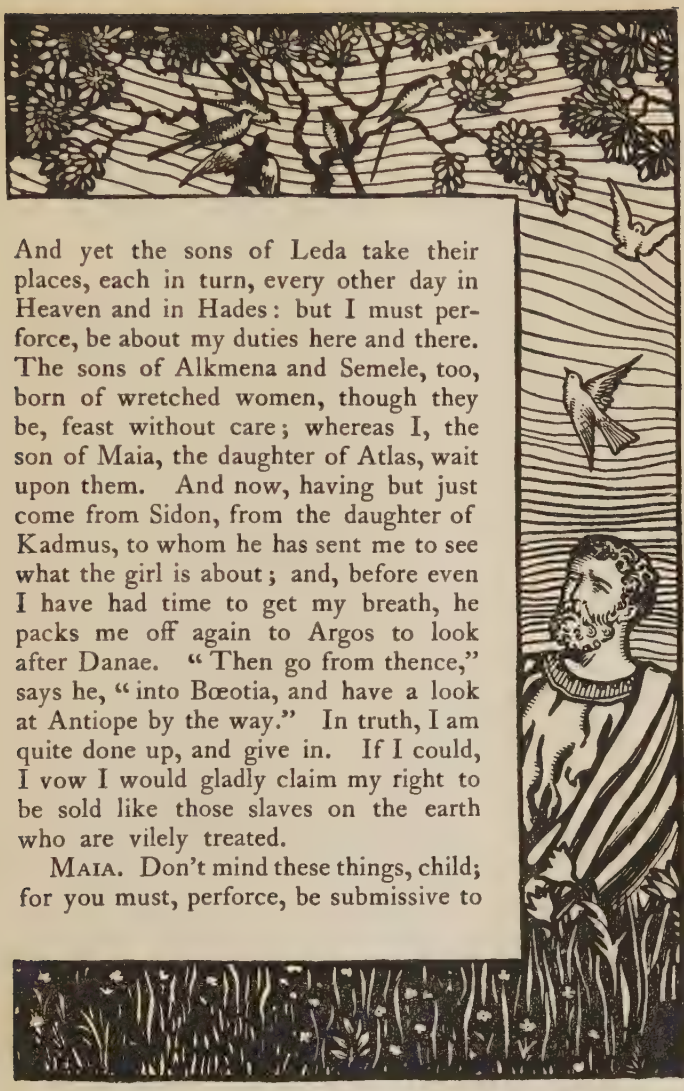
HER. [*crying*]. Why, mother, is any God in Heaven more thoroughly wretched than I?

MAIA. Pray, don't talk in that way, my dear Hermes.

HER. Why should not I talk so, who have such a number of duties to attend to; toiling as I do all alone, and distracted to so many services? For, as soon as I am up at daybreak, I have to sweep out our banqueting-hall, and after carefully arranging the couches, and putting each particular thing in

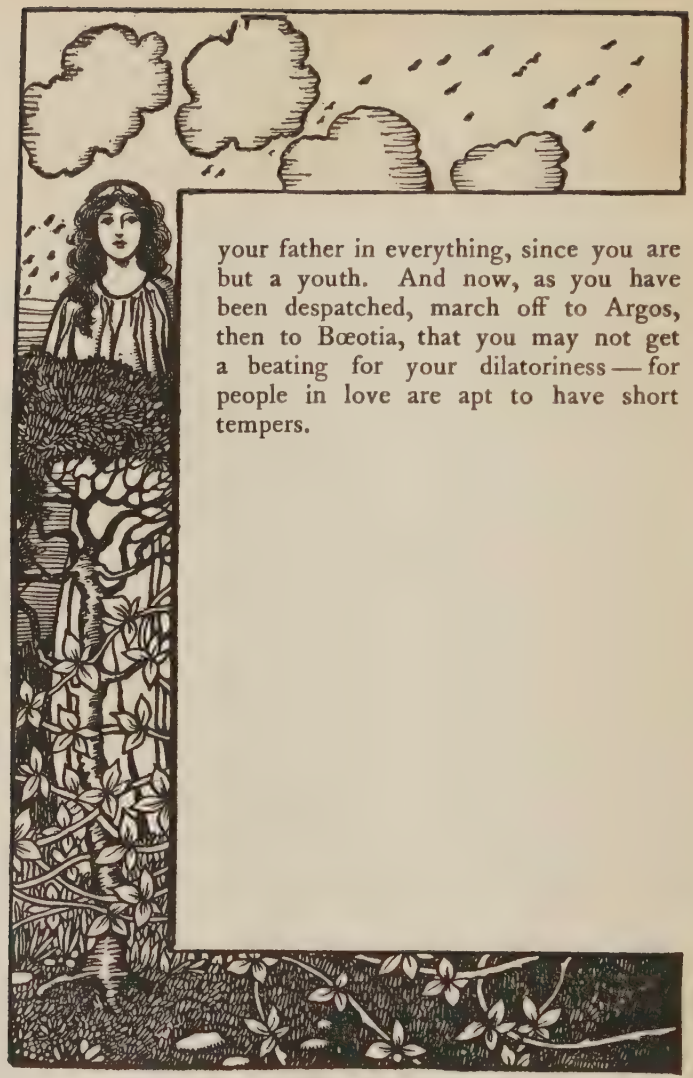


order, I have to take my place at the side of Zeus, and carry about in all directions the messages I receive from him, running up and down the whole day like a courier. And, as soon as I have returned up here again, while still covered with dust, I must hand him the ambrosia. Before, too, this lately purchased cupbearer arrived, it was my business to pour in the nectar, also. But, what is most dreadful of all, is, that I alone of all the Gods, get no sleep even at night: but I must needs, also, be then conducting souls to Pluto, and acting as marshal of dead men, and dance attendance in his Court of Justice. For my employments by day are not enough — to take my place in the Palæstra, and even to act as herald in the representative assemblies, and to train orators — but, parcelled out as I am already, for all these services, I must, also, take part in the affairs of the dead.

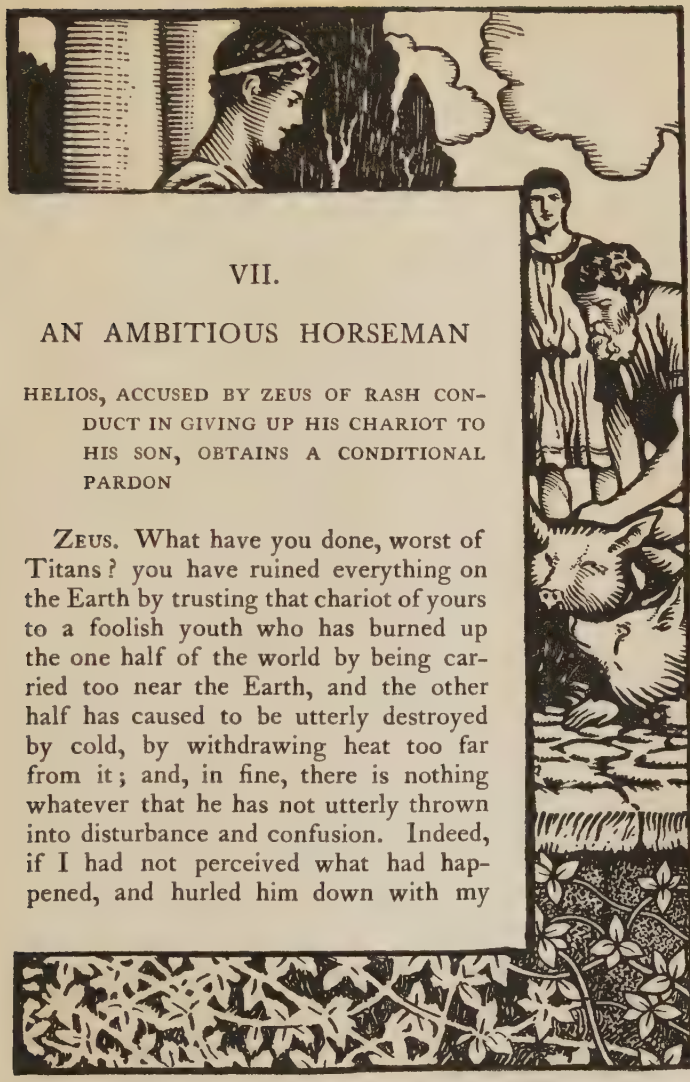


And yet the sons of Leda take their places, each in turn, every other day in Heaven and in Hades: but I must perforce, be about my duties here and there. The sons of Alkmena and Semele, too, born of wretched women, though they be, feast without care; whereas I, the son of Maia, the daughter of Atlas, wait upon them. And now, having but just come from Sidon, from the daughter of Kadmus, to whom he has sent me to see what the girl is about; and, before even I have had time to get my breath, he packs me off again to Argos to look after Danae. "Then go from thence," says he, "into Bœotia, and have a look at Antiope by the way." In truth, I am quite done up, and give in. If I could, I vow I would gladly claim my right to be sold like those slaves on the earth who are vilely treated.

MAIA. Don't mind these things, child; for you must, perforce, be submissive to



your father in everything, since you are but a youth. And now, as you have been despatched, march off to Argos, then to Bœotia, that you may not get a beating for your dilatoriness — for people in love are apt to have short tempers.

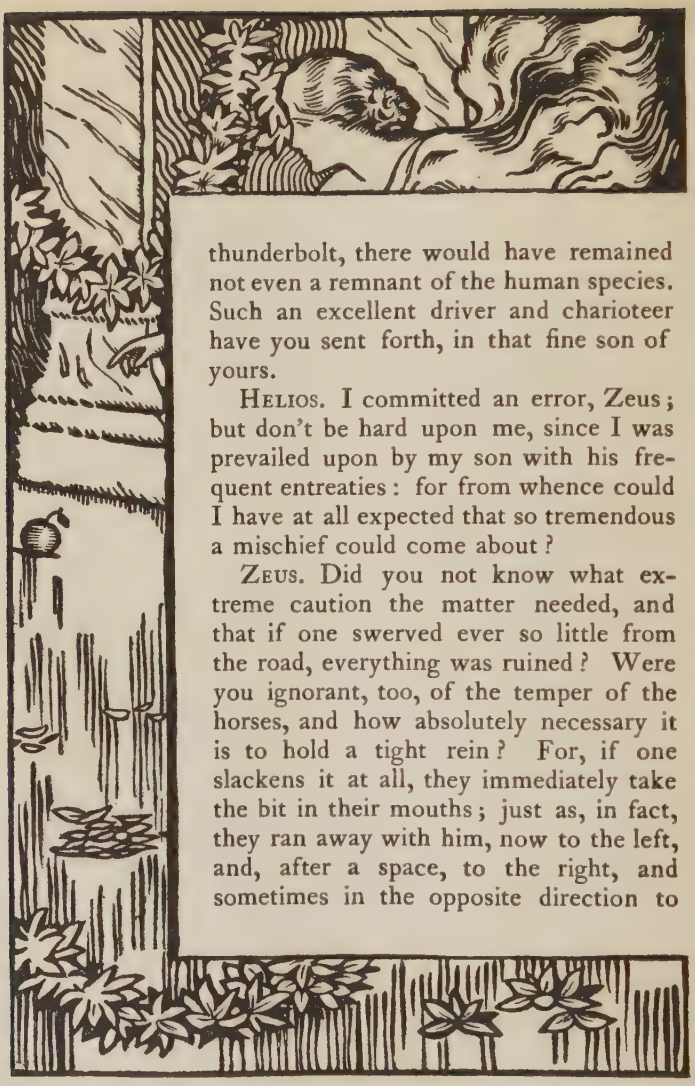


VII.

AN AMBITIOUS HORSEMAN

HELIOS, ACCUSED BY ZEUS OF RASH CONDUCT IN GIVING UP HIS CHARIOT TO HIS SON, OBTAINS A CONDITIONAL PARDON

ZEUS. What have you done, worst of Titans? you have ruined everything on the Earth by trusting that chariot of yours to a foolish youth who has burned up the one half of the world by being carried too near the Earth, and the other half has caused to be utterly destroyed by cold, by withdrawing heat too far from it; and, in fine, there is nothing whatever that he has not utterly thrown into disturbance and confusion. Indeed, if I had not perceived what had happened, and hurled him down with my



thunderbolt, there would have remained not even a remnant of the human species. Such an excellent driver and charioteer have you sent forth, in that fine son of yours.

HELIOS. I committed an error, Zeus; but don't be hard upon me, since I was prevailed upon by my son with his frequent entreaties: for from whence could I have at all expected that so tremendous a mischief could come about?

ZEUS. Did you not know what extreme caution the matter needed, and that if one swerved ever so little from the road, everything was ruined? Were you ignorant, too, of the temper of the horses, and how absolutely necessary it is to hold a tight rein? For, if one slackens it at all, they immediately take the bit in their mouths; just as, in fact, they ran away with him, now to the left, and, after a space, to the right, and sometimes in the opposite direction to



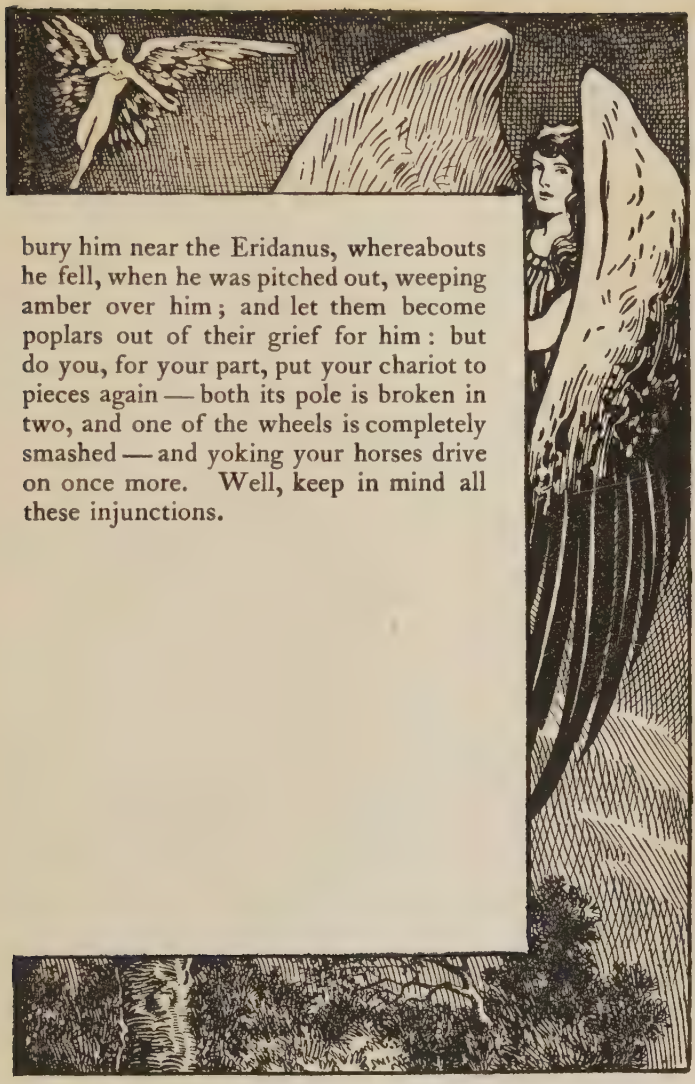
their course, and upwards and downwards, in fine, where they themselves had a mind to go; while he did not know how to treat them.

HELIOS. All this, indeed, I knew, and for that reason I for a long time resisted, and would not trust the driving to him: but, when he begged me over and over again with tears, and his mother Klymene with him, after mounting him on the chariot I cautioned him how he must stand firmly, and how far he should allow his horses to go into the higher regions, and be borne aloft; then how far he must direct them downwards again, and how he must have complete control of the reins, and not surrender them to the fieriness of his steeds. And I told him, too, how great was the peril, if he did not keep the straight road. Well, he — mere boy that he was — taking his stand upon such a tremendous fire-chariot, and peer-

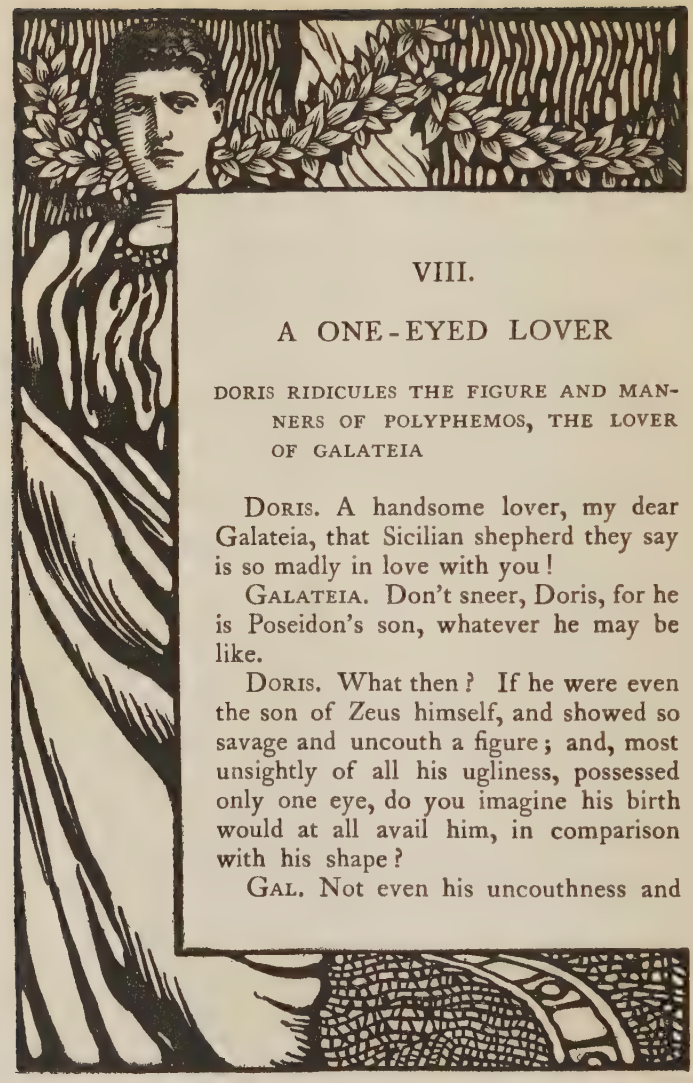


ing down into the yawning abyss, was seized with sudden terror, as was to be expected; while the horses, when they perceived that it was not I who was mounted upon the vehicle, not heeding the youthful driver, swerved from their proper route, and caused this terrific calamity. Then he, letting go the reins from sheer fright, I suppose, lest he should be thrown out himself, clung to the front rail of the chariot — but he now has received the reward of his rashness, and for me, Zeus, the consequent grief ought to be enough punishment.

Zeus. Enough punishment, do you say, you who have rashly risked all this! However, I will grant your pardon now, for this time: but, for the future, if you transgress at all in a similar fashion, or despatch any similar substitute for yourself, you shall at once know of how much more fiery virtue is my thunderbolt than your fire. So now let his sisters



bury him near the Eridanus, whereabouts he fell, when he was pitched out, weeping amber over him; and let them become poplars out of their grief for him: but do you, for your part, put your chariot to pieces again — both its pole is broken in two, and one of the wheels is completely smashed — and yoking your horses drive on once more. Well, keep in mind all these injunctions.



VIII.

A ONE-EYED LOVER

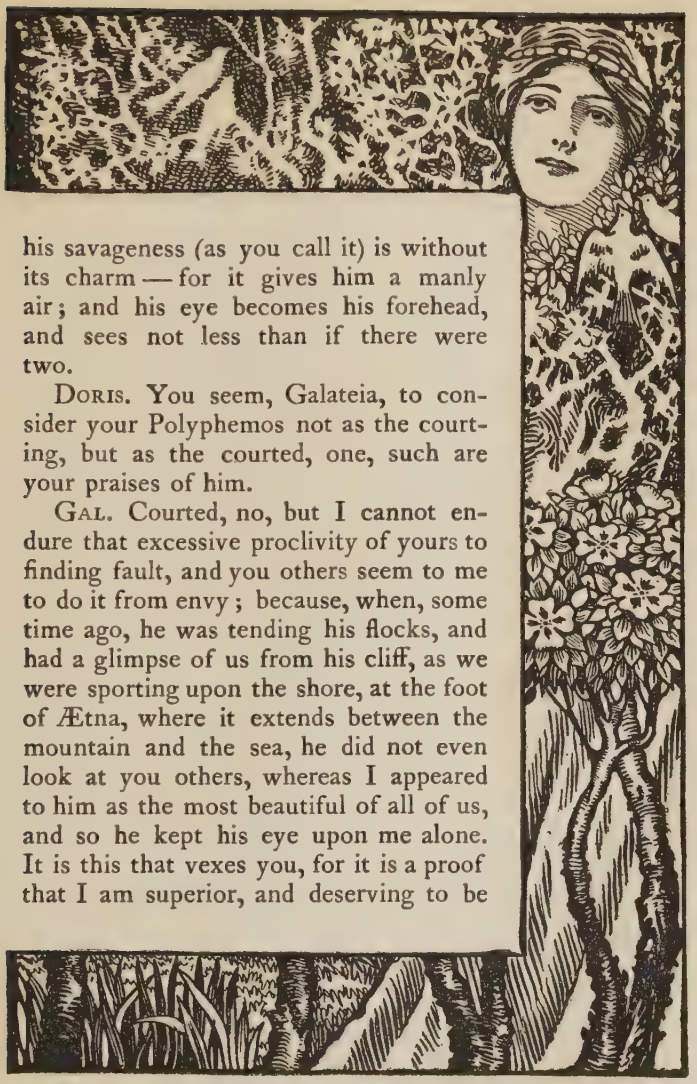
DORIS RIDICULES THE FIGURE AND MANNERS OF POLYPHEMOS, THE LOVER OF GALATEIA

DORIS. A handsome lover, my dear Galateia, that Sicilian shepherd they say is so madly in love with you!

GALATEIA. Don't sneer, Doris, for he is Poseidon's son, whatever he may be like.

DORIS. What then? If he were even the son of Zeus himself, and showed so savage and uncouth a figure; and, most unsightly of all his ugliness, possessed only one eye, do you imagine his birth would at all avail him, in comparison with his shape?

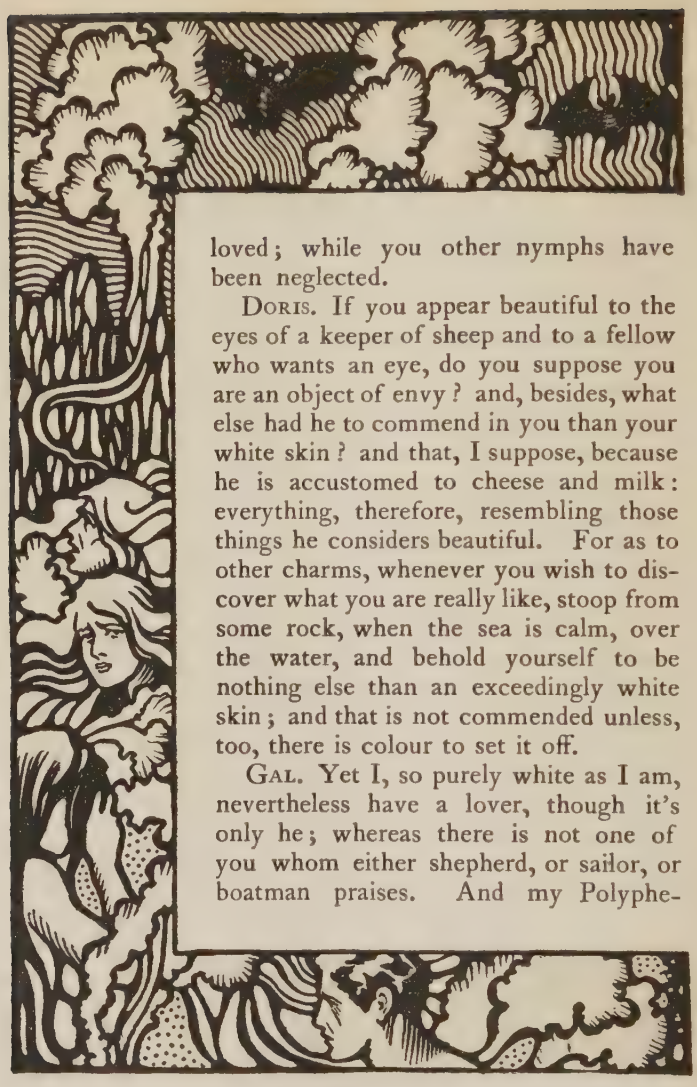
GAL. Not even his uncouthness and



his savageness (as you call it) is without its charm — for it gives him a manly air; and his eye becomes his forehead, and sees not less than if there were two.

Doris. You seem, Galateia, to consider your Polyphemos not as the courting, but as the courted, one, such are your praises of him.

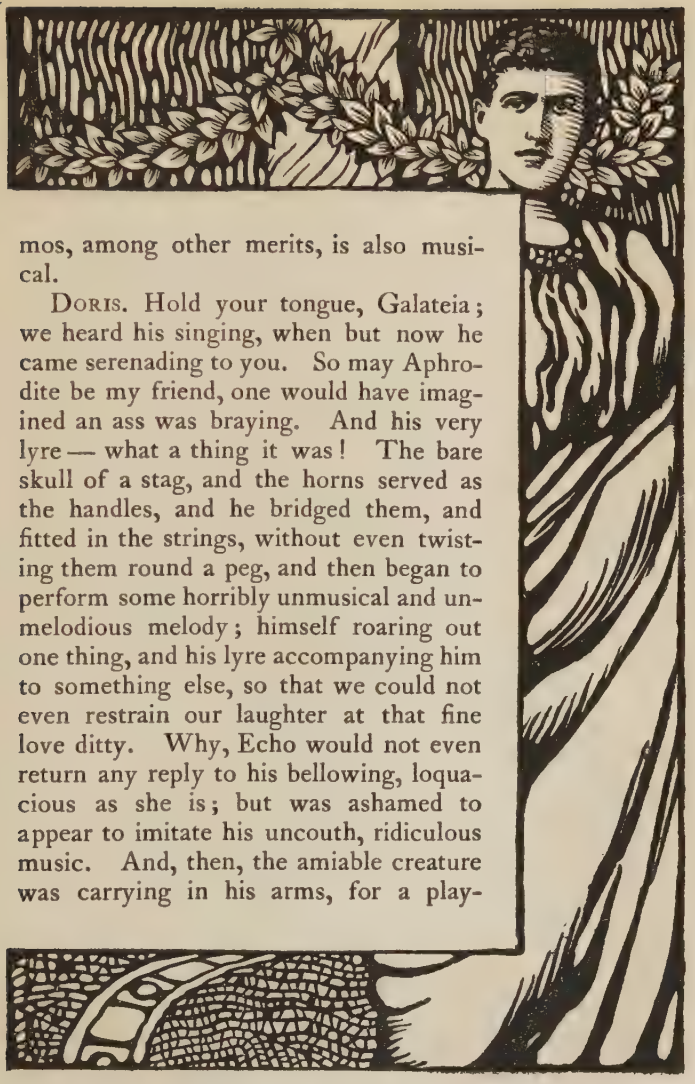
Gal. Courted, no, but I cannot endure that excessive proclivity of yours to finding fault, and you others seem to me to do it from envy; because, when, some time ago, he was tending his flocks, and had a glimpse of us from his cliff, as we were sporting upon the shore, at the foot of Ætna, where it extends between the mountain and the sea, he did not even look at you others, whereas I appeared to him as the most beautiful of all of us, and so he kept his eye upon me alone. It is this that vexes you, for it is a proof that I am superior, and deserving to be



loved; while you other nymphs have been neglected.

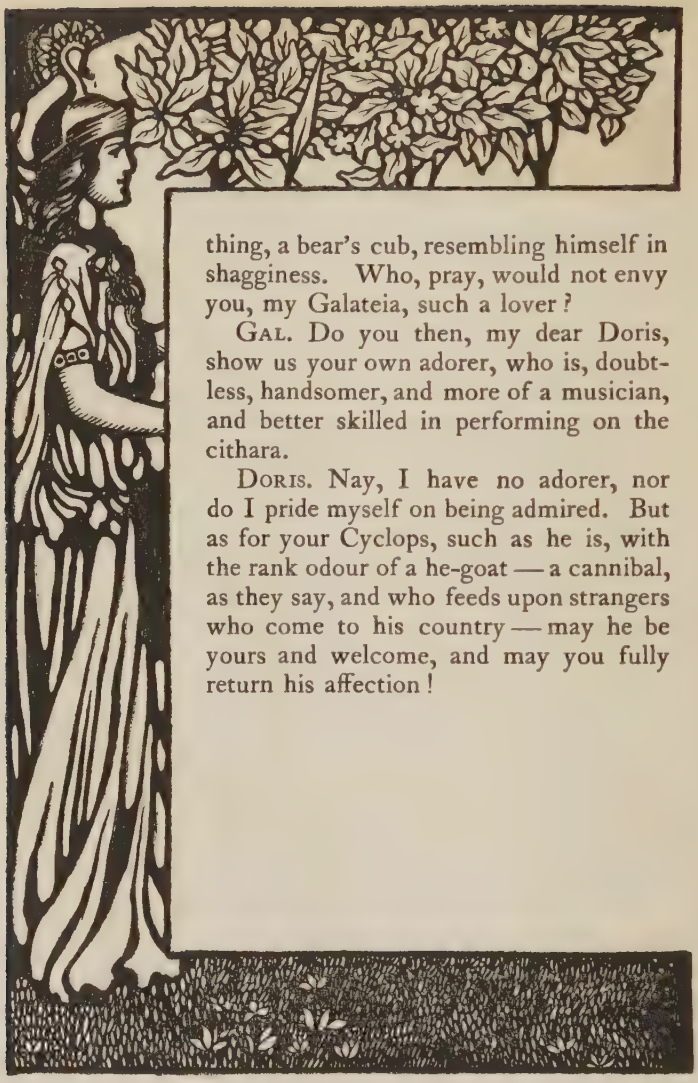
Doris. If you appear beautiful to the eyes of a keeper of sheep and to a fellow who wants an eye, do you suppose you are an object of envy? and, besides, what else had he to commend in you than your white skin? and that, I suppose, because he is accustomed to cheese and milk: everything, therefore, resembling those things he considers beautiful. For as to other charms, whenever you wish to discover what you are really like, stoop from some rock, when the sea is calm, over the water, and behold yourself to be nothing else than an exceedingly white skin; and that is not commended unless, too, there is colour to set it off.

Gal. Yet I, so purely white as I am, nevertheless have a lover, though it's only he; whereas there is not one of you whom either shepherd, or sailor, or boatman praises. And my Polyphe-



mos, among other merits, is also musical.

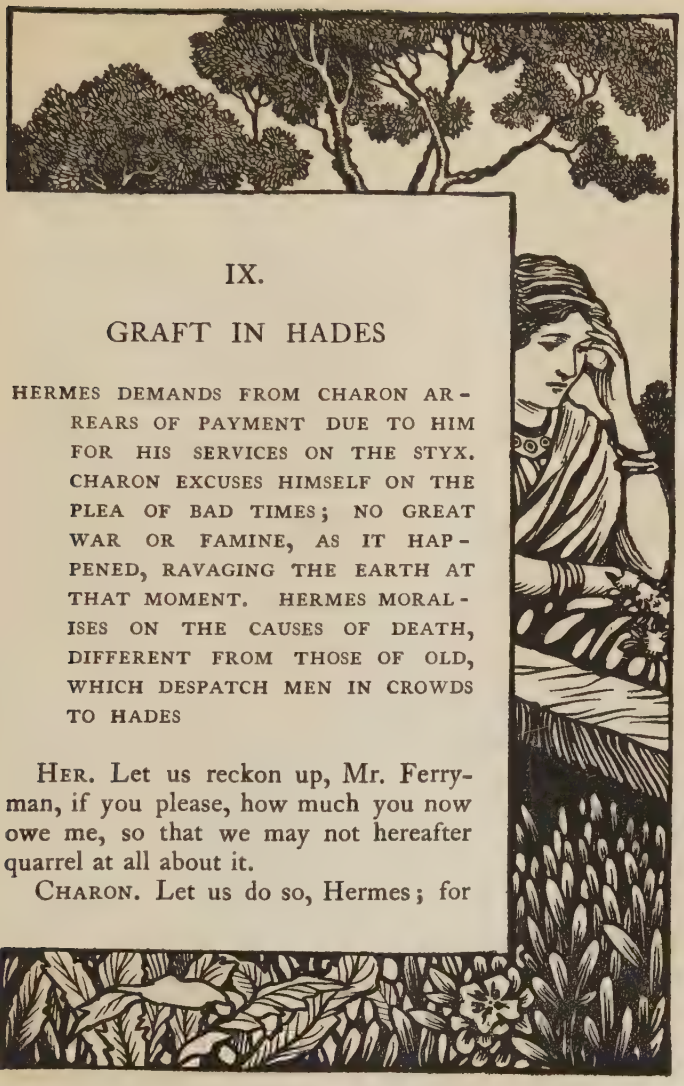
Doris. Hold your tongue, Galateia; we heard his singing, when but now he came serenading to you. So may Aphrodite be my friend, one would have imagined an ass was braying. And his very lyre — what a thing it was! The bare skull of a stag, and the horns served as the handles, and he bridged them, and fitted in the strings, without even twisting them round a peg, and then began to perform some horribly unmusical and unmelodious melody; himself roaring out one thing, and his lyre accompanying him to something else, so that we could not even restrain our laughter at that fine love ditty. Why, Echo would not even return any reply to his bellowing, loquacious as she is; but was ashamed to appear to imitate his uncouth, ridiculous music. And, then, the amiable creature was carrying in his arms, for a play-



thing, a bear's cub, resembling himself in shagginess. Who, pray, would not envy you, my Galateia, such a lover?

Gal. Do you then, my dear Doris, show us your own adorer, who is, doubtless, handsomer, and more of a musician, and better skilled in performing on the cithara.

Doris. Nay, I have no adorer, nor do I pride myself on being admired. But as for your Cyclops, such as he is, with the rank odour of a he-goat — a cannibal, as they say, and who feeds upon strangers who come to his country — may he be yours and welcome, and may you fully return his affection!



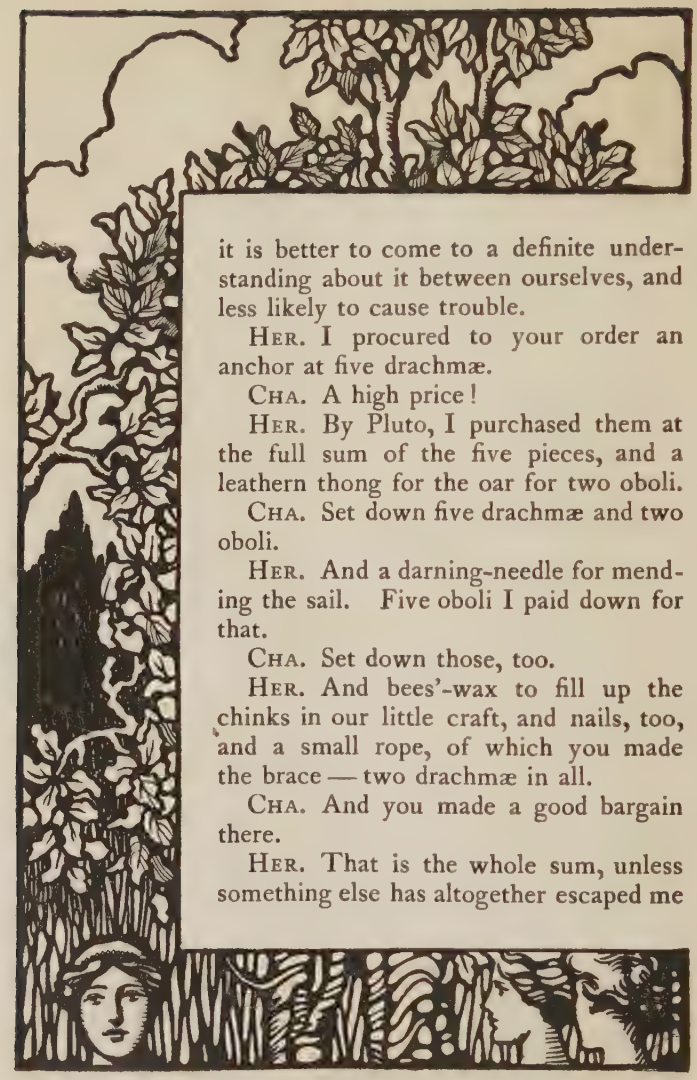
IX.

GRAFT IN HADES

HERMES DEMANDS FROM CHARON ARREARS OF PAYMENT DUE TO HIM FOR HIS SERVICES ON THE STYX. CHARON EXCUSES HIMSELF ON THE PLEA OF BAD TIMES; NO GREAT WAR OR FAMINE, AS IT HAPPENED, RAVAGING THE EARTH AT THAT MOMENT. HERMES MORALISES ON THE CAUSES OF DEATH, DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF OLD, WHICH DESPATCH MEN IN CROWDS TO HADES

HER. Let us reckon up, Mr. Ferryman, if you please, how much you now owe me, so that we may not hereafter quarrel at all about it.

CHARON. Let us do so, Hermes; for



it is better to come to a definite understanding about it between ourselves, and less likely to cause trouble.

HER. I procured to your order an anchor at five drachmæ.

CHA. A high price!

HER. By Pluto, I purchased them at the full sum of the five pieces, and a leathern thong for the oar for two oboli.

CHA. Set down five drachmæ and two oboli.

HER. And a darning-needle for mending the sail. Five oboli I paid down for that.

CHA. Set down those, too.

HER. And bees'-wax to fill up the chinks in our little craft, and nails, too, and a small rope, of which you made the brace — two drachmæ in all.

CHA. And you made a good bargain there.

HER. That is the whole sum, unless something else has altogether escaped me



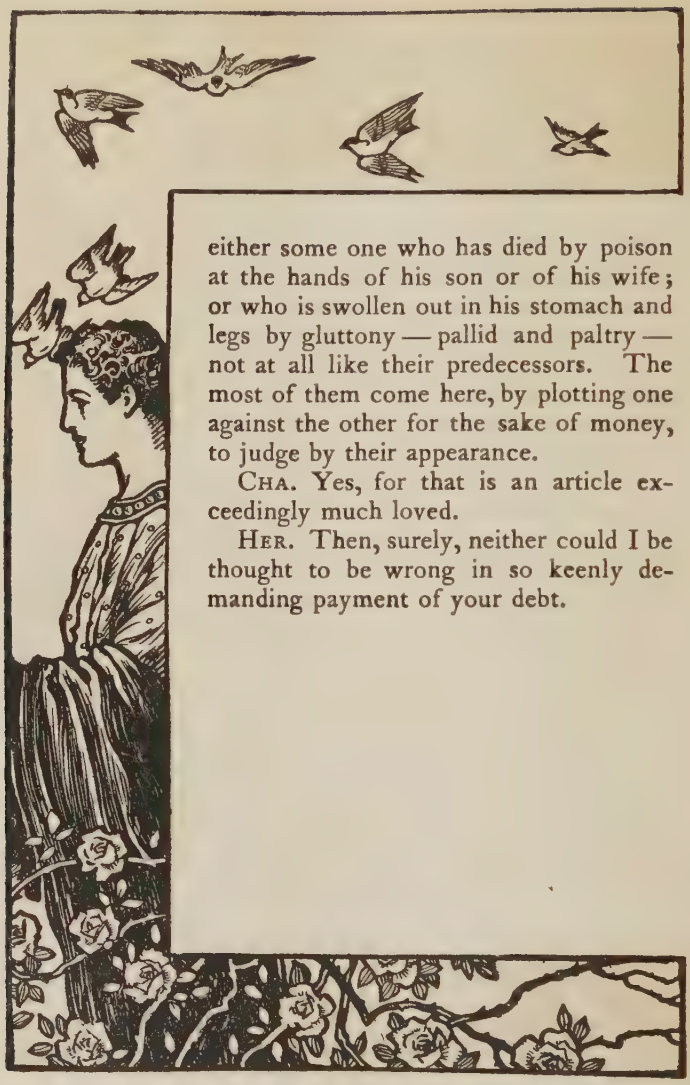
in the reckoning. And when, then, do you say that you will repay me this?

CHA. Just now, my dear Hermes, it is quite impossible. But if some pestilence or war should send us down some shoals of men, it will then be in my power to make profits by cooking the accounts of the fares.

HER. Am I, then, now to take my seat, praying for the worst to happen, with the mere chance that I may get something from it?

CHA. There is nothing for you, otherwise, Hermes. Just now, as you see, few come to us: peace prevails.

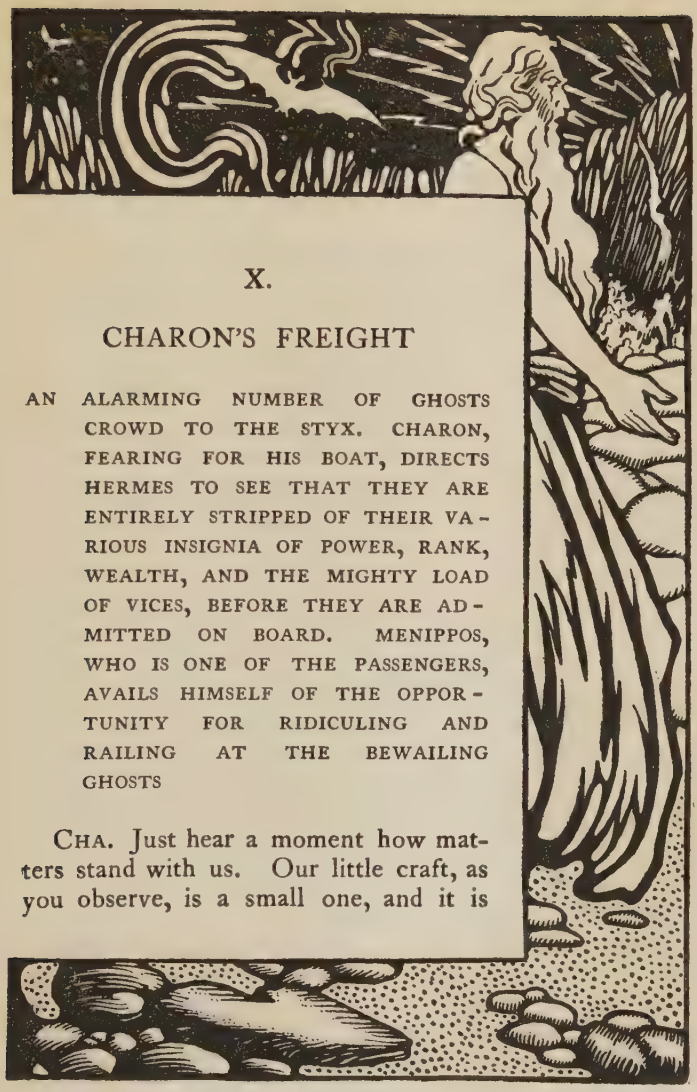
HER. Better so, even though payment of your debt due to me must be postponed by you. But, however, the men of former times, Charon — you know in what sort they used to come to us, nearly all of them, covered all over with blood, and riddled with wounds, the majority of them. But, nowadays, it is



either some one who has died by poison at the hands of his son or of his wife; or who is swollen out in his stomach and legs by gluttony — pallid and paltry — not at all like their predecessors. The most of them come here, by plotting one against the other for the sake of money, to judge by their appearance.

CHA. Yes, for that is an article exceedingly much loved.

HER. Then, surely, neither could I be thought to be wrong in so keenly demanding payment of your debt.

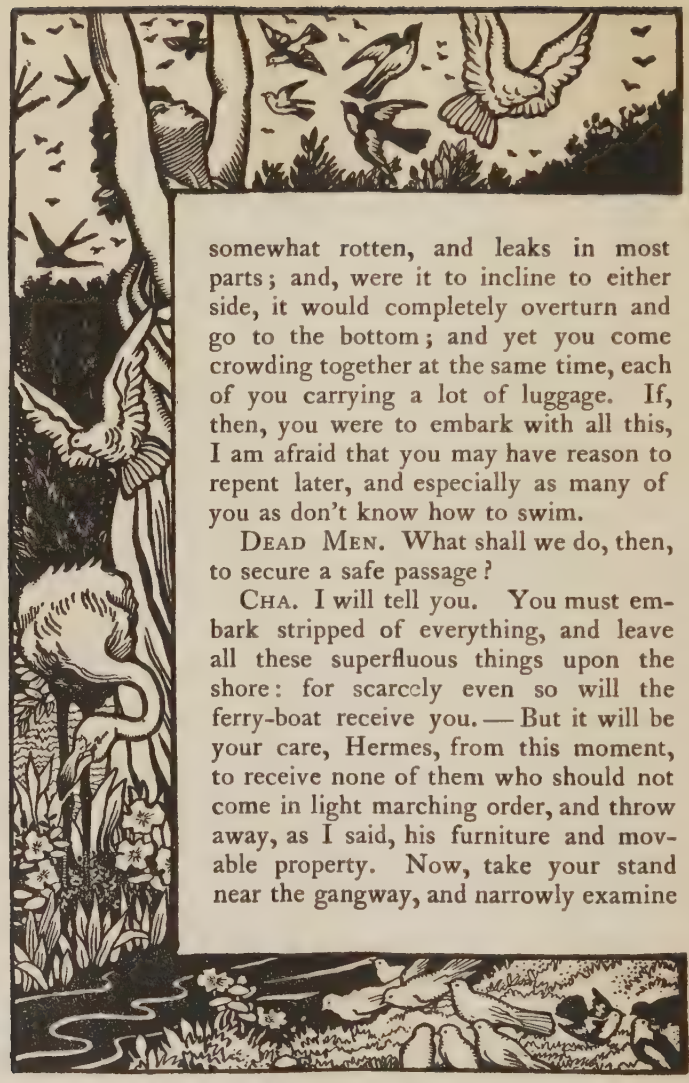


X.

CHARON'S FREIGHT

AN ALARMING NUMBER OF GHOSTS CROWD TO THE STYX. CHARON, FEARING FOR HIS BOAT, DIRECTS HERMES TO SEE THAT THEY ARE ENTIRELY STRIPPED OF THEIR VARIOUS INSIGNIA OF POWER, RANK, WEALTH, AND THE MIGHTY LOAD OF VICES, BEFORE THEY ARE ADMITTED ON BOARD. MENIPPOS, WHO IS ONE OF THE PASSENGERS, AVAILS HIMSELF OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR RIDICULING AND RAILING AT THE BEWAILING GHOSTS

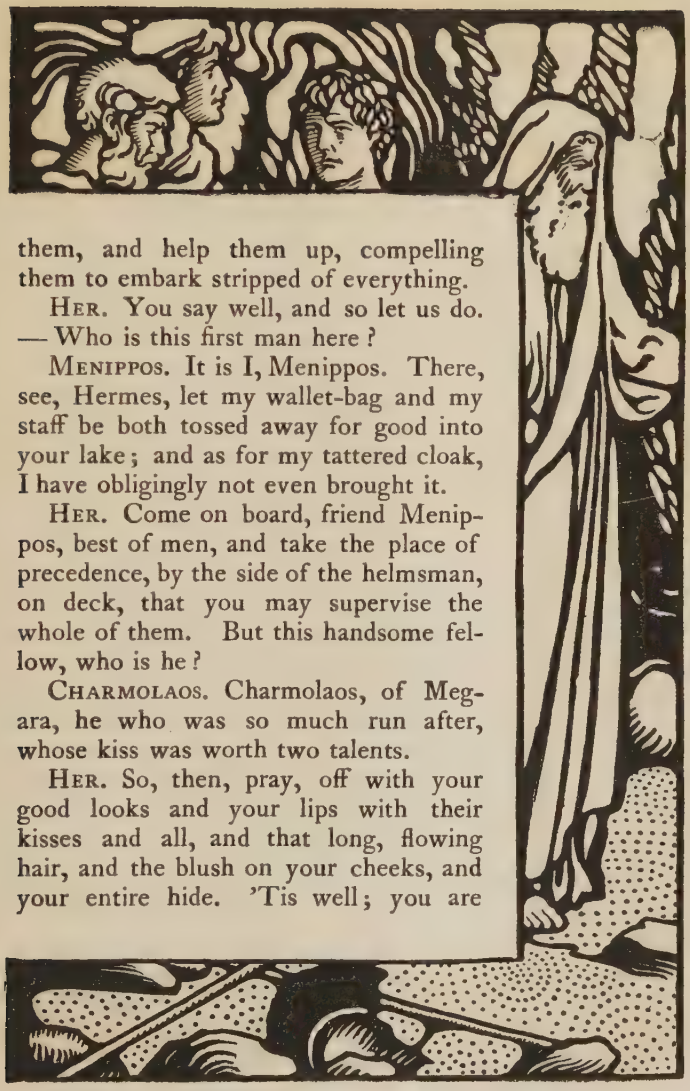
CHA. Just hear a moment how matters stand with us. Our little craft, as you observe, is a small one, and it is



somewhat rotten, and leaks in most parts; and, were it to incline to either side, it would completely overturn and go to the bottom; and yet you come crowding together at the same time, each of you carrying a lot of luggage. If, then, you were to embark with all this, I am afraid that you may have reason to repent later, and especially as many of you as don't know how to swim.

Dead Men. What shall we do, then, to secure a safe passage?

Cha. I will tell you. You must embark stripped of everything, and leave all these superfluous things upon the shore: for scarcely even so will the ferry-boat receive you. — But it will be your care, Hermes, from this moment, to receive none of them who should not come in light marching order, and throw away, as I said, his furniture and movable property. Now, take your stand near the gangway, and narrowly examine



them, and help them up, compelling them to embark stripped of everything.

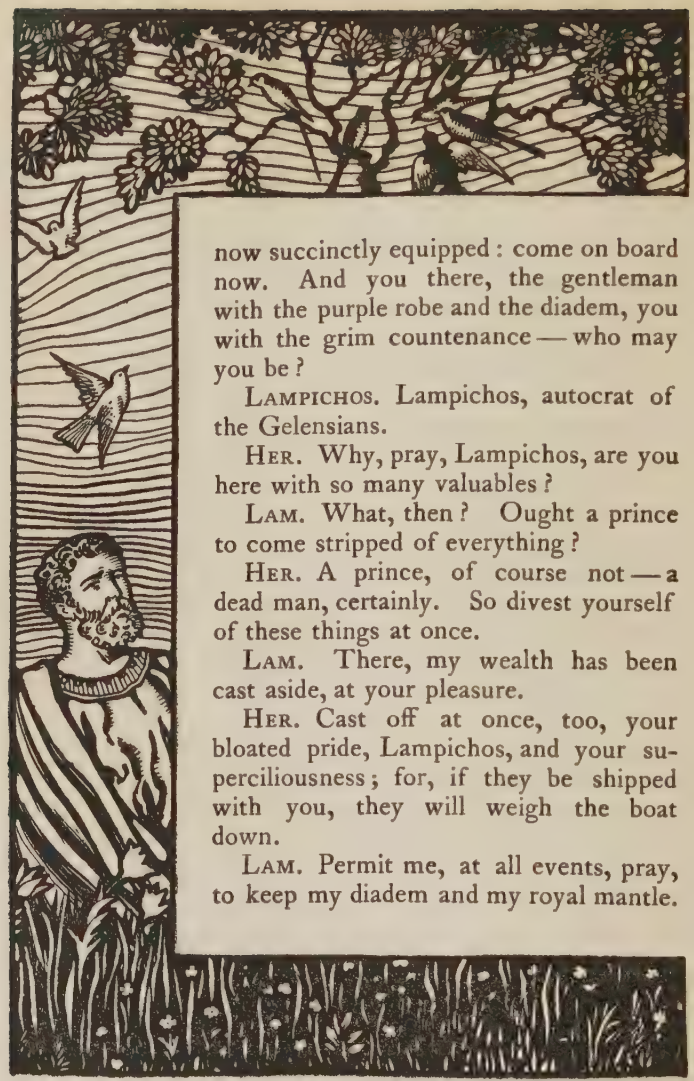
HER. You say well, and so let us do. — Who is this first man here?

MENIPPOS. It is I, Menippos. There, see, Hermes, let my wallet-bag and my staff be both tossed away for good into your lake; and as for my tattered cloak, I have obligingly not even brought it.

HER. Come on board, friend Menippos, best of men, and take the place of precedence, by the side of the helmsman, on deck, that you may supervise the whole of them. But this handsome fellow, who is he?

CHARMOLAOS. Charmolaos, of Megara, he who was so much run after, whose kiss was worth two talents.

HER. So, then, pray, off with your good looks and your lips with their kisses and all, and that long, flowing hair, and the blush on your cheeks, and your entire hide. 'Tis well; you are



now succinctly equipped: come on board now. And you there, the gentleman with the purple robe and the diadem, you with the grim countenance — who may you be?

LAMPICHOS. Lampichos, autocrat of the Gelensians.

HER. Why, pray, Lampichos, are you here with so many valuables?

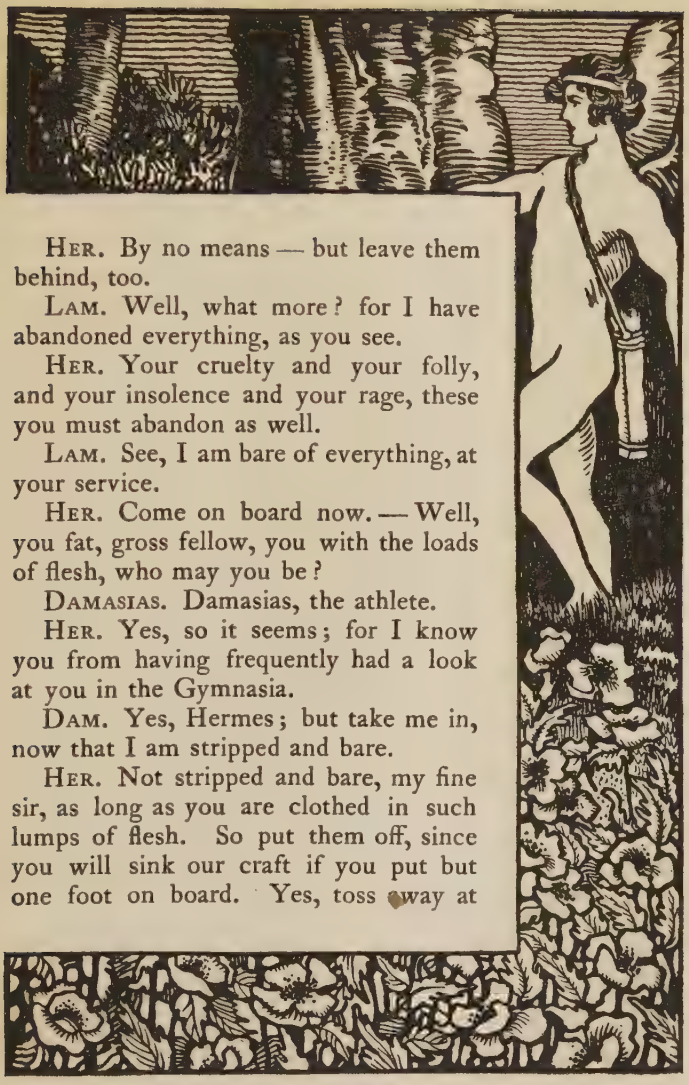
LAM. What, then? Ought a prince to come stripped of everything?

HER. A prince, of course not — a dead man, certainly. So divest yourself of these things at once.

LAM. There, my wealth has been cast aside, at your pleasure.

HER. Cast off at once, too, your bloated pride, Lampichos, and your superciliousness; for, if they be shipped with you, they will weigh the boat down.

LAM. Permit me, at all events, pray, to keep my diadem and my royal mantle.



HER. By no means — but leave them behind, too.

LAM. Well, what more? for I have abandoned everything, as you see.

HER. Your cruelty and your folly, and your insolence and your rage, these you must abandon as well.

LAM. See, I am bare of everything, at your service.

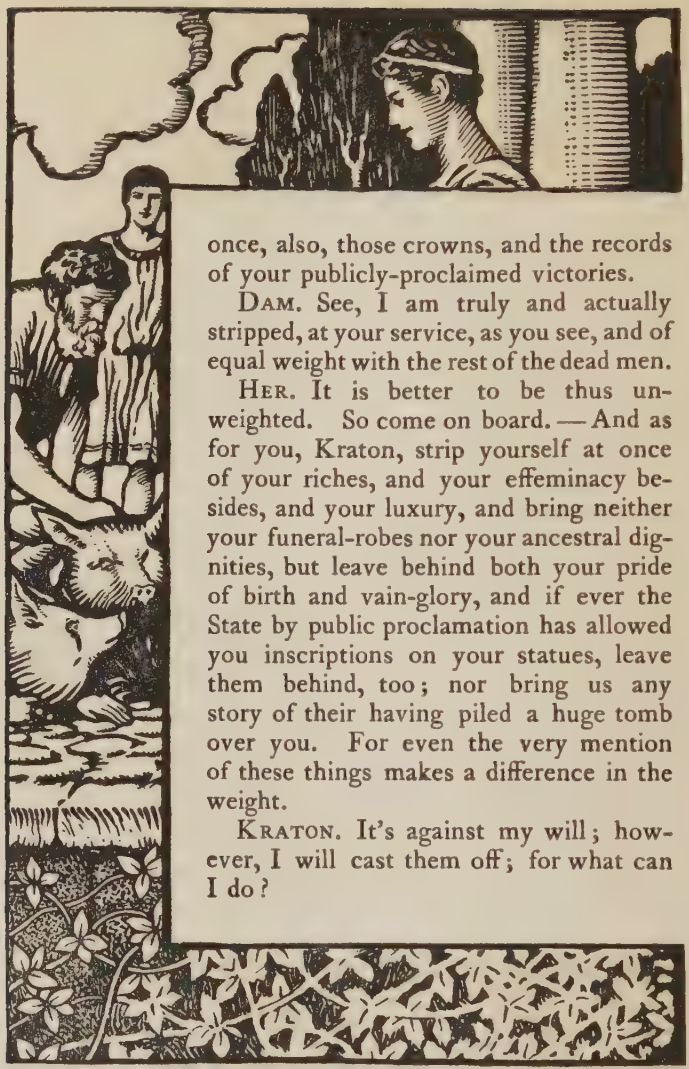
HER. Come on board now. — Well, you fat, gross fellow, you with the loads of flesh, who may you be?

DAMASIAS. Damasias, the athlete.

HER. Yes, so it seems; for I know you from having frequently had a look at you in the Gymnasia.

DAM. Yes, Hermes; but take me in, now that I am stripped and bare.

HER. Not stripped and bare, my fine sir, as long as you are clothed in such lumps of flesh. So put them off, since you will sink our craft if you put but one foot on board. Yes, toss away at

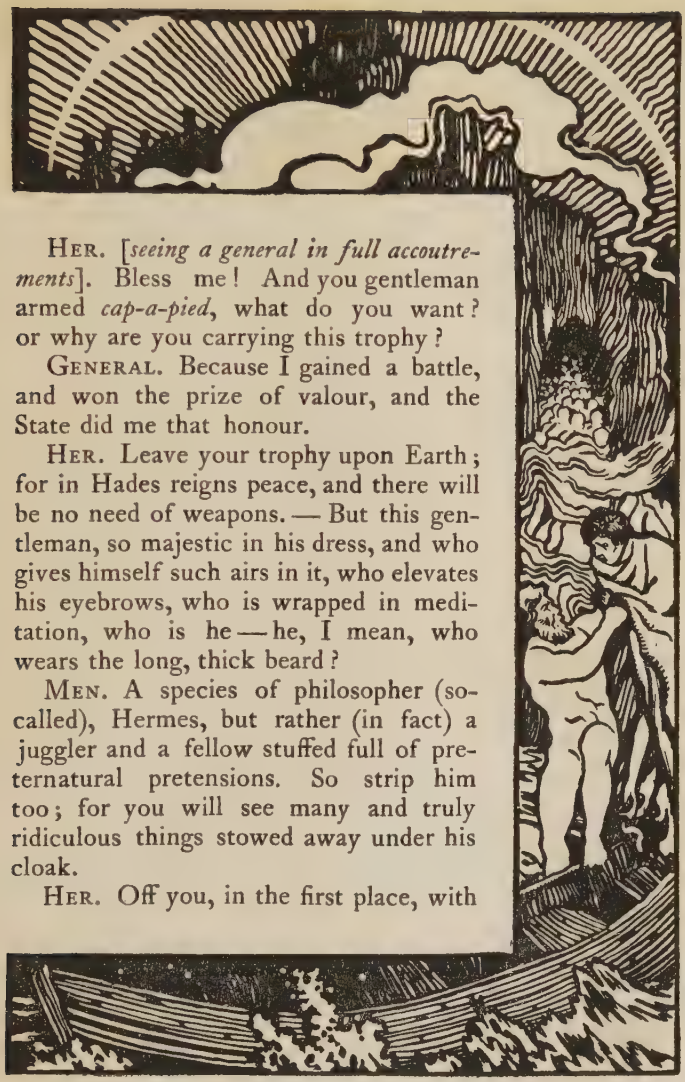


once, also, those crowns, and the records of your publicly-proclaimed victories.

DAM. See, I am truly and actually stripped, at your service, as you see, and of equal weight with the rest of the dead men.

HER. It is better to be thus unweighted. So come on board. — And as for you, Kraton, strip yourself at once of your riches, and your effeminacy besides, and your luxury, and bring neither your funeral-robes nor your ancestral dignities, but leave behind both your pride of birth and vain-glory, and if ever the State by public proclamation has allowed you inscriptions on your statues, leave them behind, too; nor bring us any story of their having piled a huge tomb over you. For even the very mention of these things makes a difference in the weight.

KRATON. It's against my will; however, I will cast them off; for what can I do?



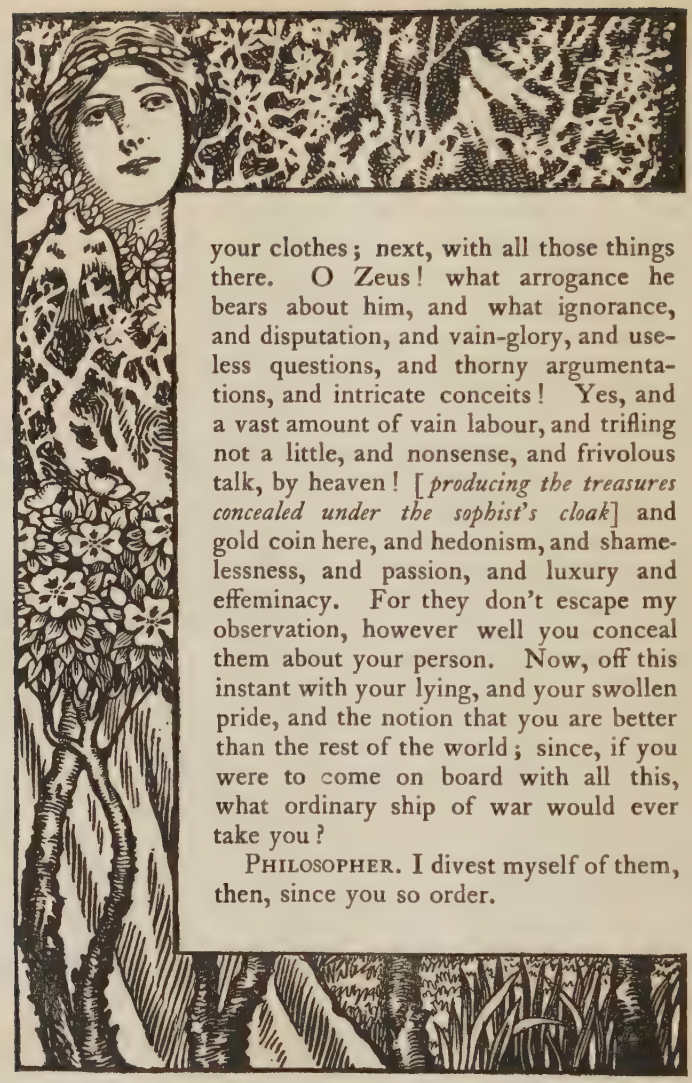
HER. [*seeing a general in full accoutrements*]. Bless me! And you gentleman armed *cap-a-pied*, what do you want? or why are you carrying this trophy?

GENERAL. Because I gained a battle, and won the prize of valour, and the State did me that honour.

HER. Leave your trophy upon Earth; for in Hades reigns peace, and there will be no need of weapons. — But this gentleman, so majestic in his dress, and who gives himself such airs in it, who elevates his eyebrows, who is wrapped in meditation, who is he — he, I mean, who wears the long, thick beard?

MEN. A species of philosopher (so-called), Hermes, but rather (in fact) a juggler and a fellow stuffed full of preternatural pretensions. So strip him too; for you will see many and truly ridiculous things stowed away under his cloak.

HER. Off you, in the first place, with



your clothes; next, with all those things there. O Zeus! what arrogance he bears about him, and what ignorance, and disputation, and vain-glory, and useless questions, and thorny argumentations, and intricate conceits! Yes, and a vast amount of vain labour, and trifling not a little, and nonsense, and frivolous talk, by heaven! [*producing the treasures concealed under the sophist's cloak*] and gold coin here, and hedonism, and shamelessness, and passion, and luxury and effeminacy. For they don't escape my observation, however well you conceal them about your person. Now, off this instant with your lying, and your swollen pride, and the notion that you are better than the rest of the world; since, if you were to come on board with all this, what ordinary ship of war would ever take you?

PHILOSOPHER. I divest myself of them, then, since you so order.



MEN. Nay, but let him put off, too, that beard, Hermes, heavy and shaggy, as you observe. There are, at the least, five pounds of hair.

HER. You are right. Off with that also.

PHIL. And who will be the barber?

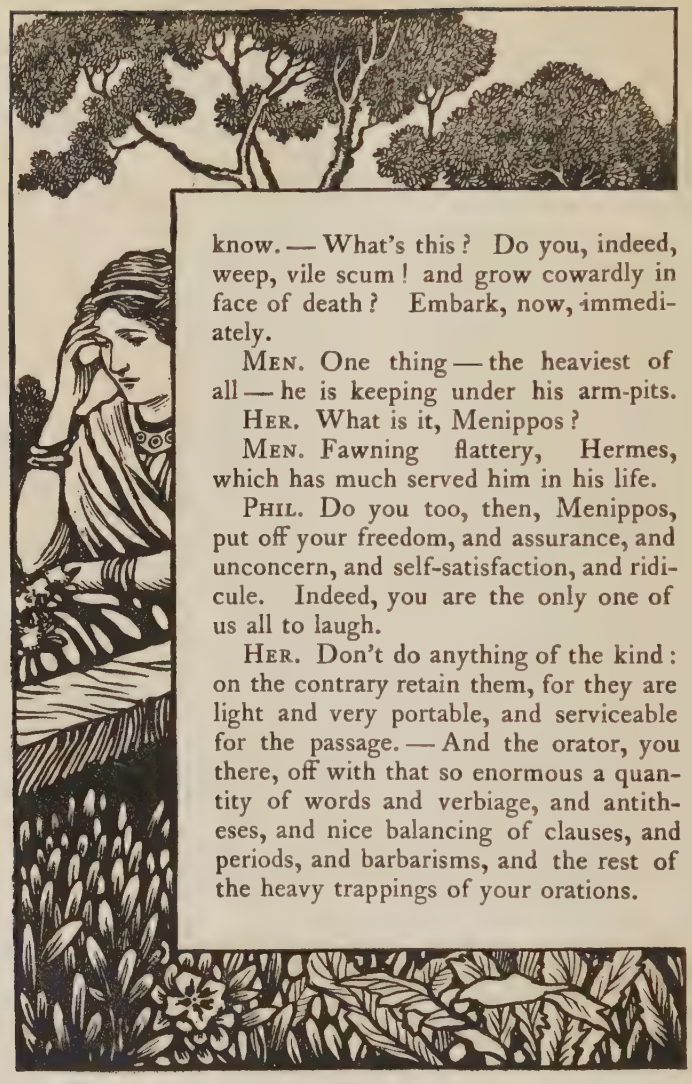
HER. Menippos here will take the ship-carpenter's axe and will chop it off, making use of the gangway as a block.

MEN. No, Hermes; but hand me up a saw — for that will be more entertaining.

HER. The axe will do. — Well done! Now that you have divested yourself of your he-goatish odours, you turn out more like a man.

MEN. Do you want me to remove a little from his eyebrows?

HER. By all means; for he raises them ever above his forehead, stretching himself upwards — why, I don't



know. — What's this? Do you, indeed, weep, vile scum! and grow cowardly in face of death? Embark, now, immediately.

MEN. One thing — the heaviest of all — he is keeping under his arm-pits.

HER. What is it, Menippos?

MEN. Fawning flattery, Hermes, which has much served him in his life.

PHIL. Do you too, then, Menippos, put off your freedom, and assurance, and unconcern, and self-satisfaction, and ridicule. Indeed, you are the only one of us all to laugh.

HER. Don't do anything of the kind: on the contrary retain them, for they are light and very portable, and serviceable for the passage. — And the orator, you there, off with that so enormous a quantity of words and verbiage, and antitheses, and nice balancing of clauses, and periods, and barbarisms, and the rest of the heavy trappings of your orations.



ORATOR. Well, see, I am stripping myself of them.

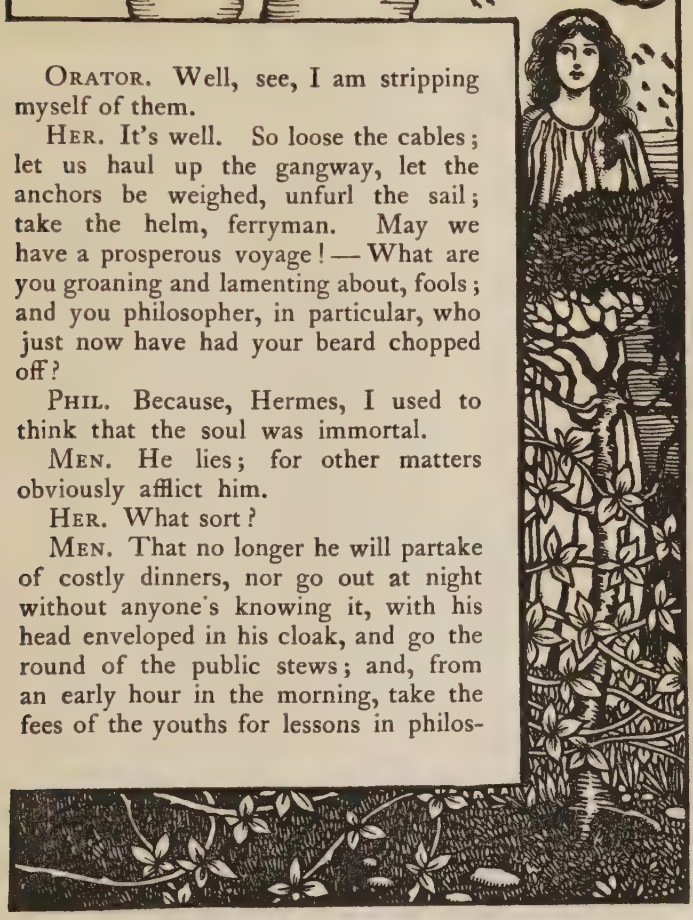
HER. It's well. So loose the cables; let us haul up the gangway, let the anchors be weighed, unfurl the sail; take the helm, ferryman. May we have a prosperous voyage! — What are you groaning and lamenting about, fools; and you philosopher, in particular, who just now have had your beard chopped off?

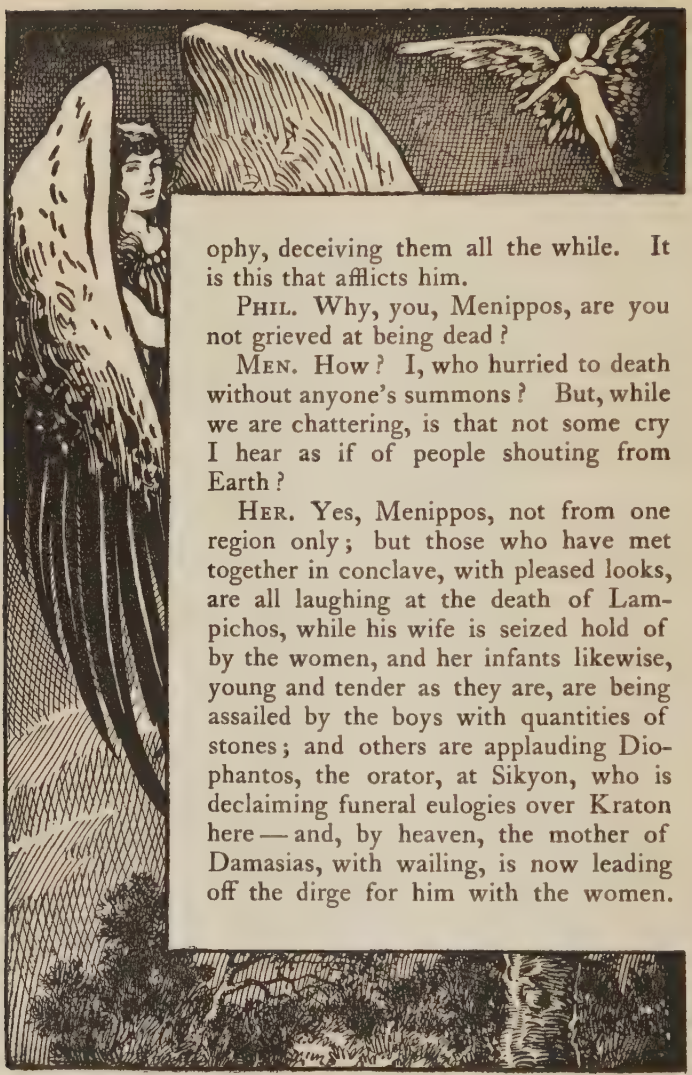
PHIL. Because, Hermes, I used to think that the soul was immortal.

MEN. He lies; for other matters obviously afflict him.

HER. What sort?

MEN. That no longer he will partake of costly dinners, nor go out at night without anyone's knowing it, with his head enveloped in his cloak, and go the round of the public stews; and, from an early hour in the morning, take the fees of the youths for lessons in philos-



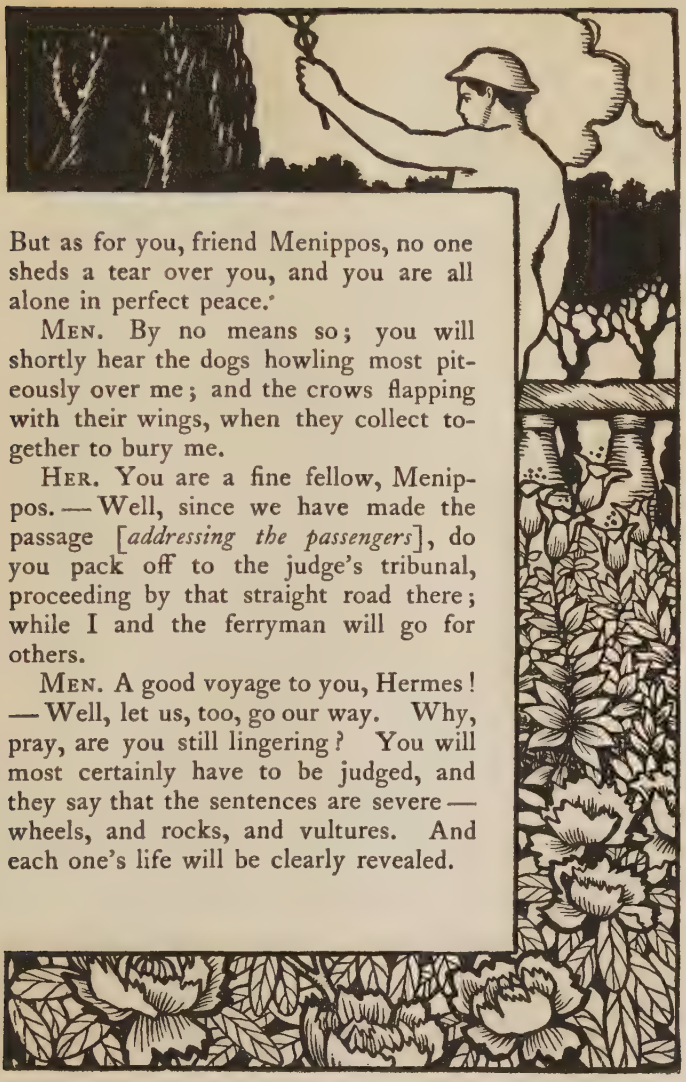


ophy, deceiving them all the while. It is this that afflicts him.

PHIL. Why, you, Menippos, are you not grieved at being dead?

MEN. How? I, who hurried to death without anyone's summons? But, while we are chattering, is that not some cry I hear as if of people shouting from Earth?

HER. Yes, Menippos, not from one region only; but those who have met together in conclave, with pleased looks, are all laughing at the death of Lampichos, while his wife is seized hold of by the women, and her infants likewise, young and tender as they are, are being assailed by the boys with quantities of stones; and others are applauding Diophantos, the orator, at Sikyon, who is declaiming funeral eulogies over Kraton here — and, by heaven, the mother of Damasias, with wailing, is now leading off the dirge for him with the women.

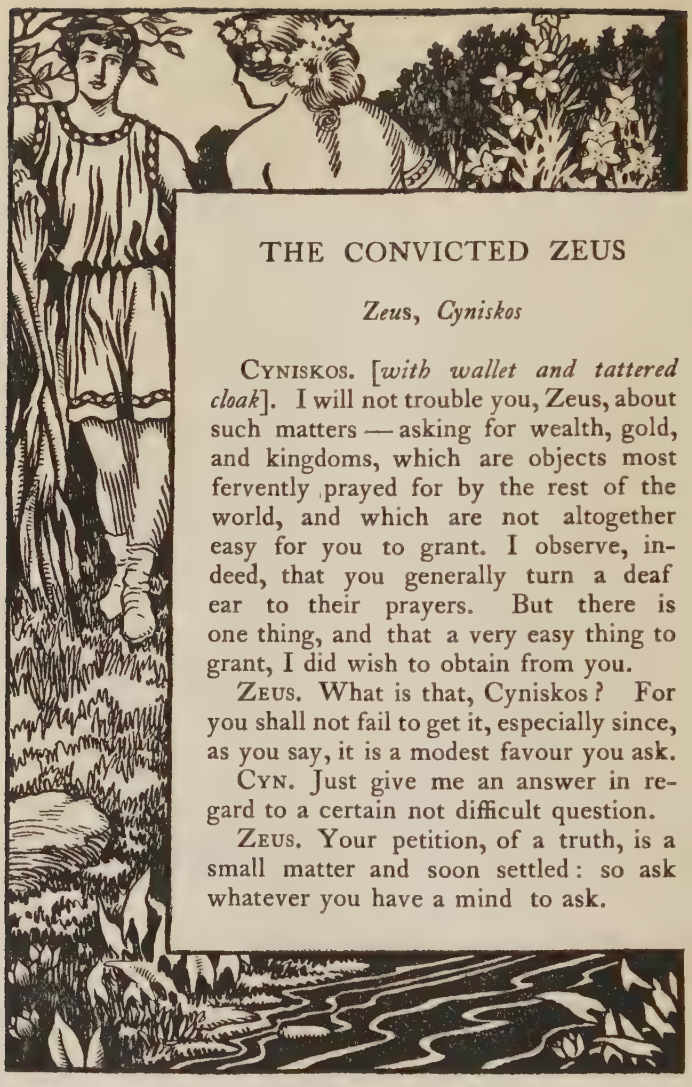


But as for you, friend Menippos, no one sheds a tear over you, and you are all alone in perfect peace.

Men. By no means so; you will shortly hear the dogs howling most piteously over me; and the crows flapping with their wings, when they collect together to bury me.

Her. You are a fine fellow, Menippos. — Well, since we have made the passage [*addressing the passengers*], do you pack off to the judge's tribunal, proceeding by that straight road there; while I and the ferryman will go for others.

Men. A good voyage to you, Hermes! — Well, let us, too, go our way. Why, pray, are you still lingering? You will most certainly have to be judged, and they say that the sentences are severe — wheels, and rocks, and vultures. And each one's life will be clearly revealed.



THE CONVICTED ZEUS

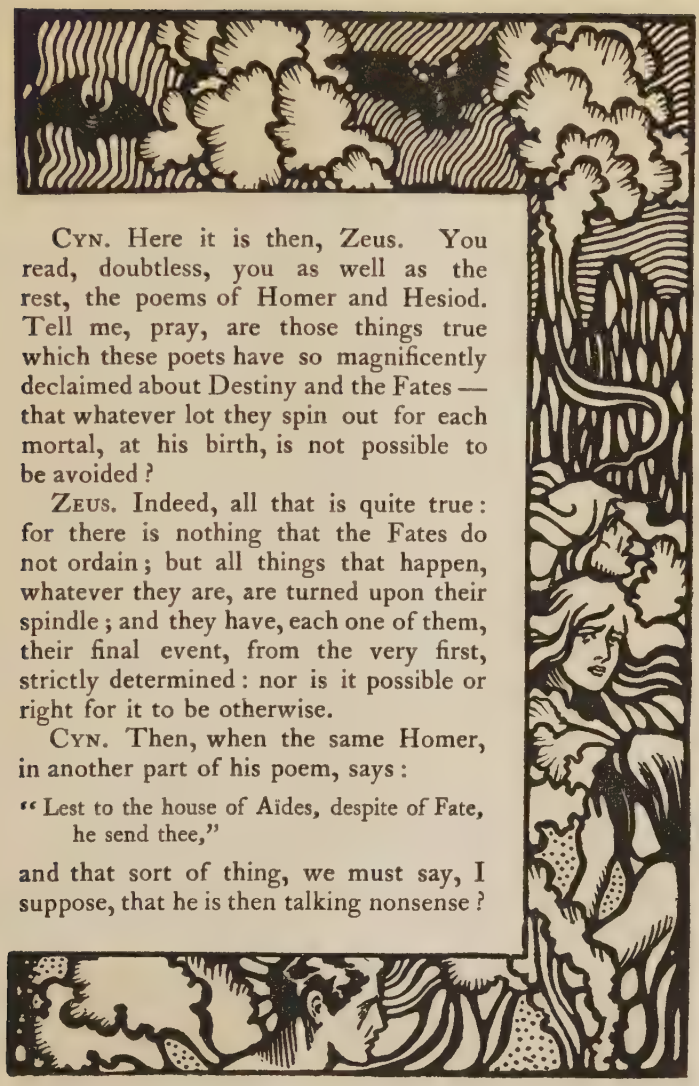
Zeus, Cyniskos

CYNISKOS. [*with wallet and tattered cloak*]. I will not trouble you, Zeus, about such matters — asking for wealth, gold, and kingdoms, which are objects most fervently prayed for by the rest of the world, and which are not altogether easy for you to grant. I observe, indeed, that you generally turn a deaf ear to their prayers. But there is one thing, and that a very easy thing to grant, I did wish to obtain from you.

ZEUS. What is that, Cyniskos? For you shall not fail to get it, especially since, as you say, it is a modest favour you ask.

CYN. Just give me an answer in regard to a certain not difficult question.

ZEUS. Your petition, of a truth, is a small matter and soon settled: so ask whatever you have a mind to ask.



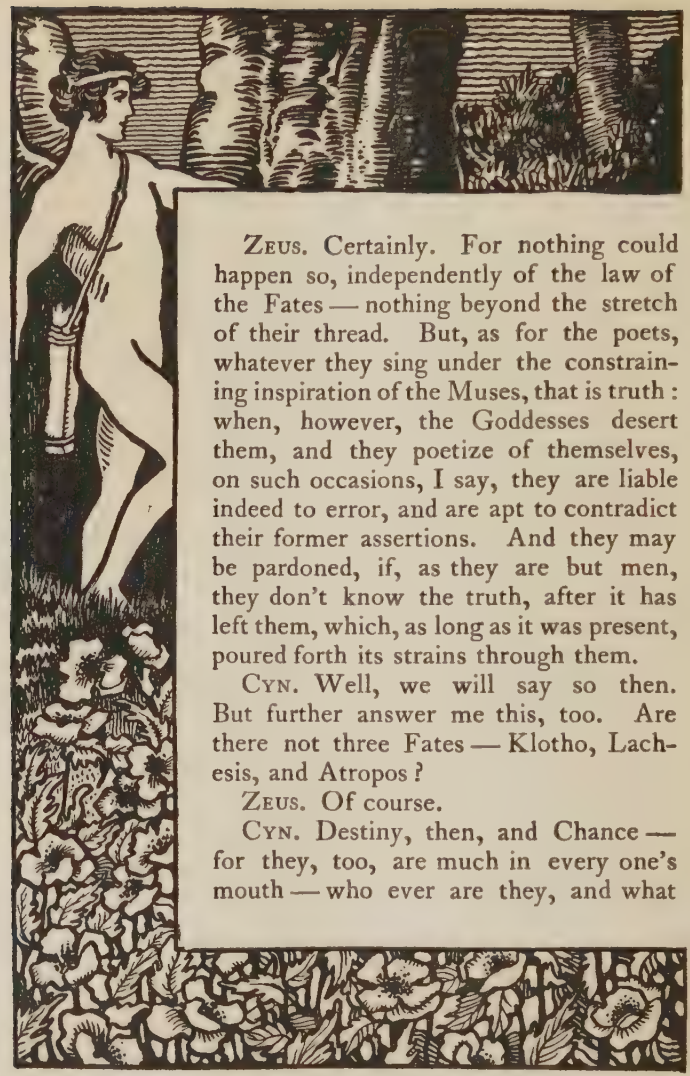
Cyn. Here it is then, Zeus. You read, doubtless, you as well as the rest, the poems of Homer and Hesiod. Tell me, pray, are those things true which these poets have so magnificently declaimed about Destiny and the Fates — that whatever lot they spin out for each mortal, at his birth, is not possible to be avoided?

Zeus. Indeed, all that is quite true: for there is nothing that the Fates do not ordain; but all things that happen, whatever they are, are turned upon their spindle; and they have, each one of them, their final event, from the very first, strictly determined: nor is it possible or right for it to be otherwise.

Cyn. Then, when the same Homer, in another part of his poem, says:

"Lest to the house of Aïdes, despite of Fate,
he send thee,"

and that sort of thing, we must say, I suppose, that he is then talking nonsense?

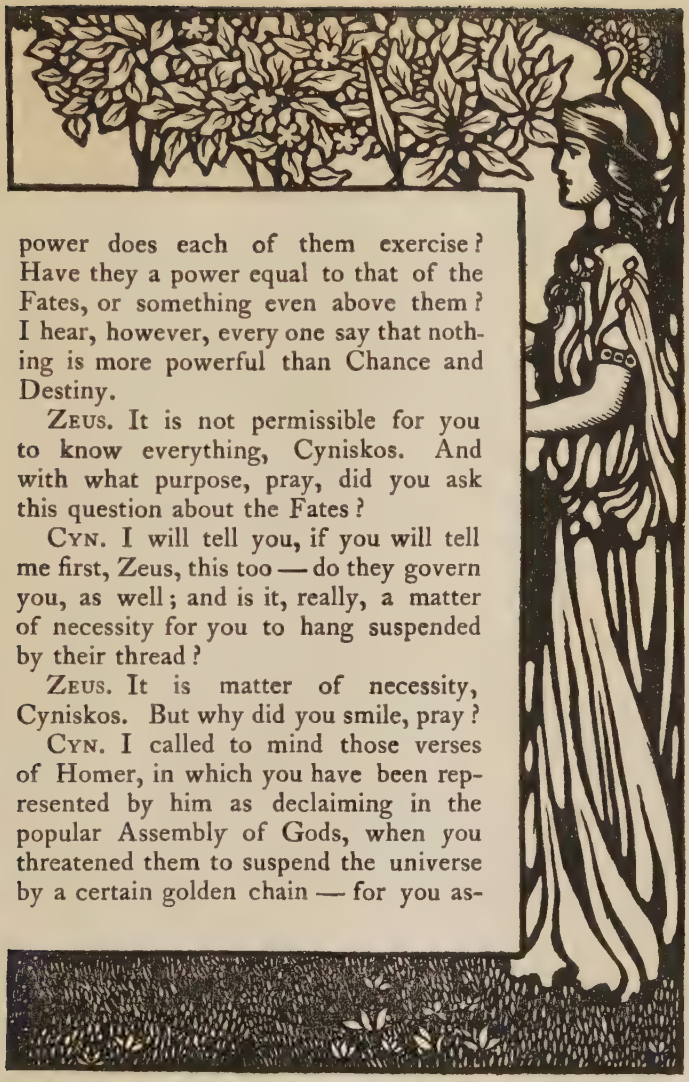


Zeus. Certainly. For nothing could happen so, independently of the law of the Fates — nothing beyond the stretch of their thread. But, as for the poets, whatever they sing under the constraining inspiration of the Muses, that is truth: when, however, the Goddesses desert them, and they poetize of themselves, on such occasions, I say, they are liable indeed to error, and are apt to contradict their former assertions. And they may be pardoned, if, as they are but men, they don't know the truth, after it has left them, which, as long as it was present, poured forth its strains through them.

Cyn. Well, we will say so then. But further answer me this, too. Are there not three Fates — Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos?

Zeus. Of course.

Cyn. Destiny, then, and Chance — for they, too, are much in every one's mouth — who ever are they, and what



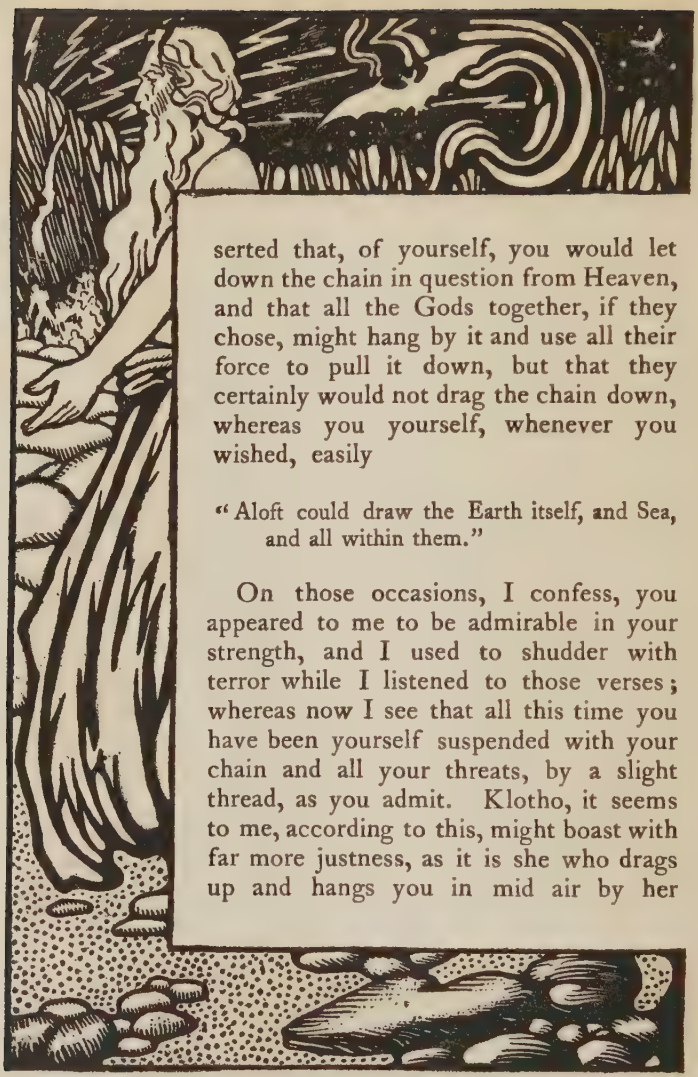
power does each of them exercise? Have they a power equal to that of the Fates, or something even above them? I hear, however, every one say that nothing is more powerful than Chance and Destiny.

ZEUS. It is not permissible for you to know everything, Cyniskos. And with what purpose, pray, did you ask this question about the Fates?

CYN. I will tell you, if you will tell me first, Zeus, this too — do they govern you, as well; and is it, really, a matter of necessity for you to hang suspended by their thread?

ZEUS. It is matter of necessity, Cyniskos. But why did you smile, pray?

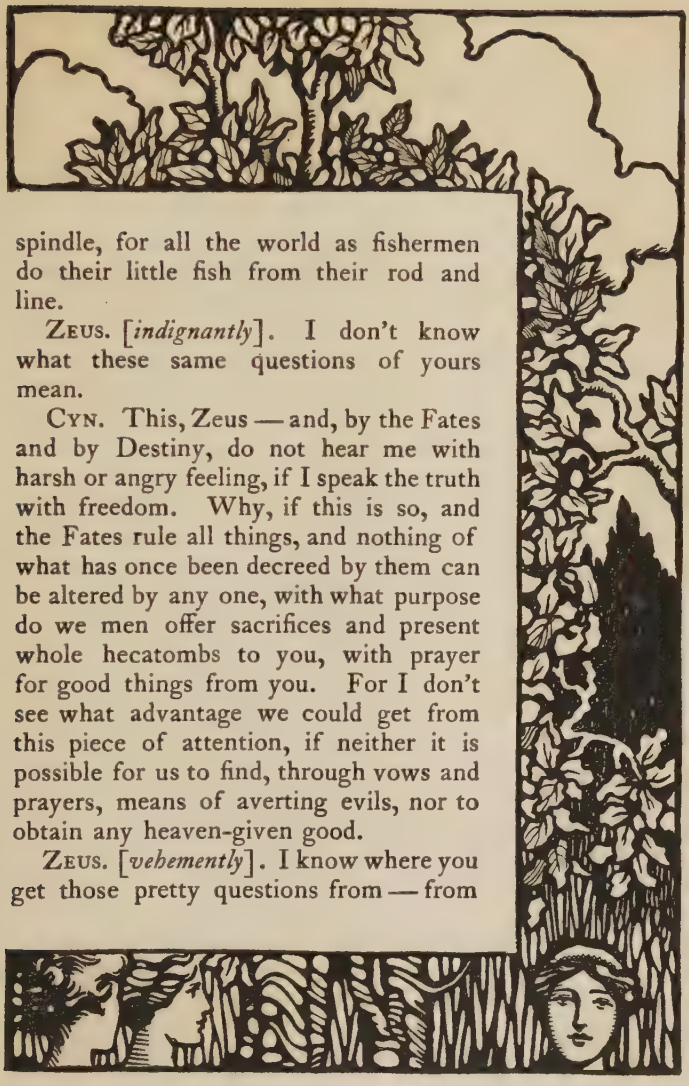
CYN. I called to mind those verses of Homer, in which you have been represented by him as declaiming in the popular Assembly of Gods, when you threatened them to suspend the universe by a certain golden chain — for you as-



serted that, of yourself, you would let down the chain in question from Heaven, and that all the Gods together, if they chose, might hang by it and use all their force to pull it down, but that they certainly would not drag the chain down, whereas you yourself, whenever you wished, easily

"Aloft could draw the Earth itself, and Sea,
and all within them."

On those occasions, I confess, you appeared to me to be admirable in your strength, and I used to shudder with terror while I listened to those verses; whereas now I see that all this time you have been yourself suspended with your chain and all your threats, by a slight thread, as you admit. Klotho, it seems to me, according to this, might boast with far more justness, as it is she who drags up and hangs you in mid air by her

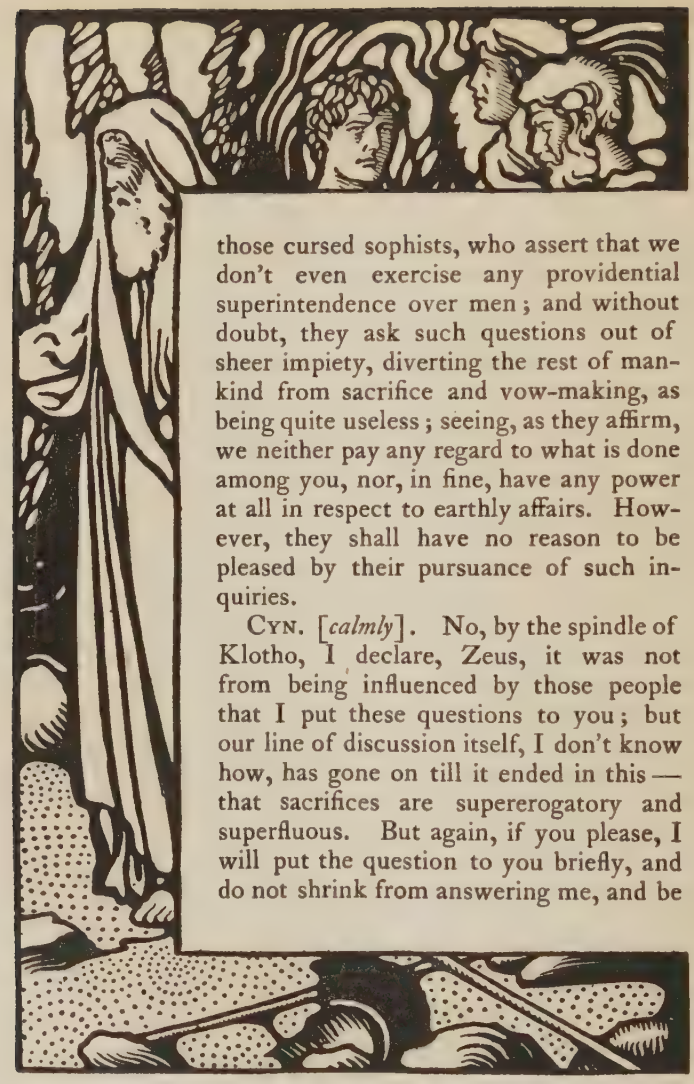


spindle, for all the world as fishermen do their little fish from their rod and line.

ZEUS. [*indignantly*]. I don't know what these same questions of yours mean.

CYN. This, Zeus — and, by the Fates and by Destiny, do not hear me with harsh or angry feeling, if I speak the truth with freedom. Why, if this is so, and the Fates rule all things, and nothing of what has once been decreed by them can be altered by any one, with what purpose do we men offer sacrifices and present whole hecatombs to you, with prayer for good things from you. For I don't see what advantage we could get from this piece of attention, if neither it is possible for us to find, through vows and prayers, means of averting evils, nor to obtain any heaven-given good.

ZEUS. [*vehemently*]. I know where you get those pretty questions from — from



those cursed sophists, who assert that we don't even exercise any providential superintendence over men; and without doubt, they ask such questions out of sheer impiety, diverting the rest of mankind from sacrifice and vow-making, as being quite useless; seeing, as they affirm, we neither pay any regard to what is done among you, nor, in fine, have any power at all in respect to earthly affairs. However, they shall have no reason to be pleased by their pursuance of such inquiries.

Cyn. [*calmly*]. No, by the spindle of Klotho, I declare, Zeus, it was not from being influenced by those people that I put these questions to you; but our line of discussion itself, I don't know how, has gone on till it ended in this — that sacrifices are supererogatory and superfluous. But again, if you please, I will put the question to you briefly, and do not shrink from answering me, and be

so kind as to give a more candid reply than is your wont.

Zeus. Ask away, if you have leisure to talk such trifling nonsense.

Cyn. You affirm that everything is done by the Fates?

Zeus. Well, I do.

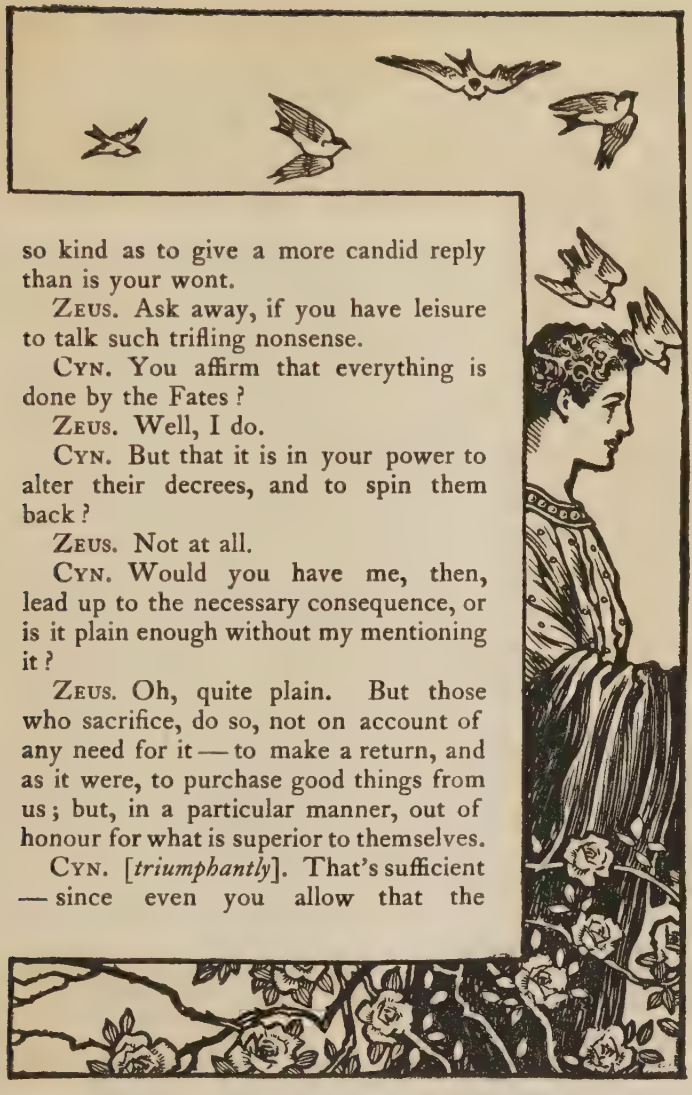
Cyn. But that it is in your power to alter their decrees, and to spin them back?

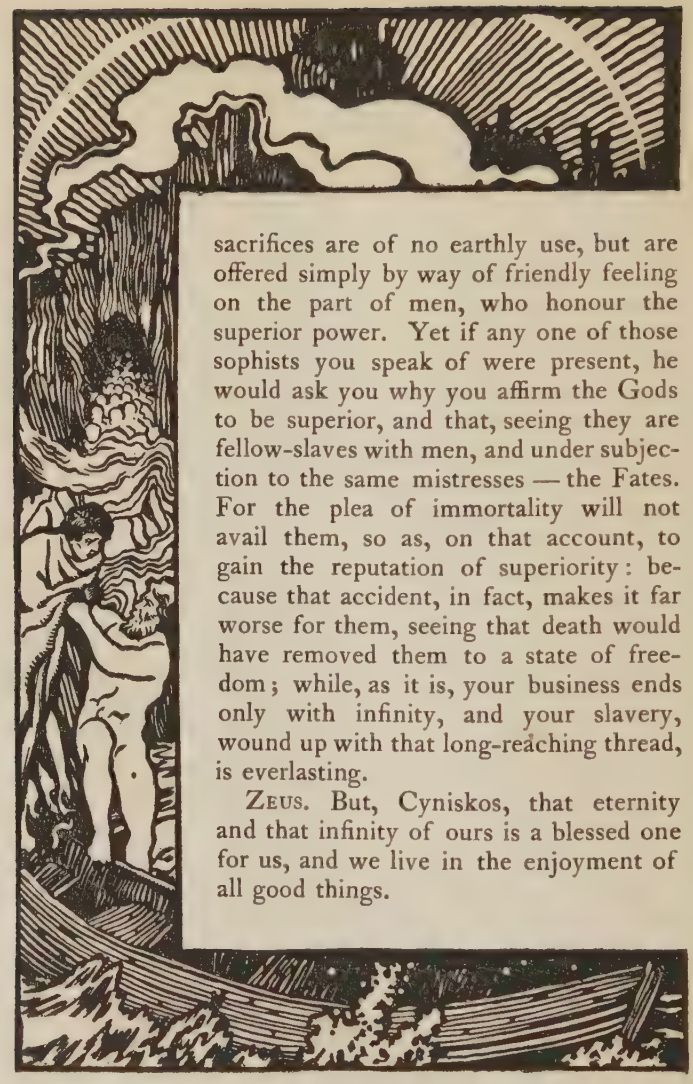
Zeus. Not at all.

Cyn. Would you have me, then, lead up to the necessary consequence, or is it plain enough without my mentioning it?

Zeus. Oh, quite plain. But those who sacrifice, do so, not on account of any need for it — to make a return, and as it were, to purchase good things from us; but, in a particular manner, out of honour for what is superior to themselves.

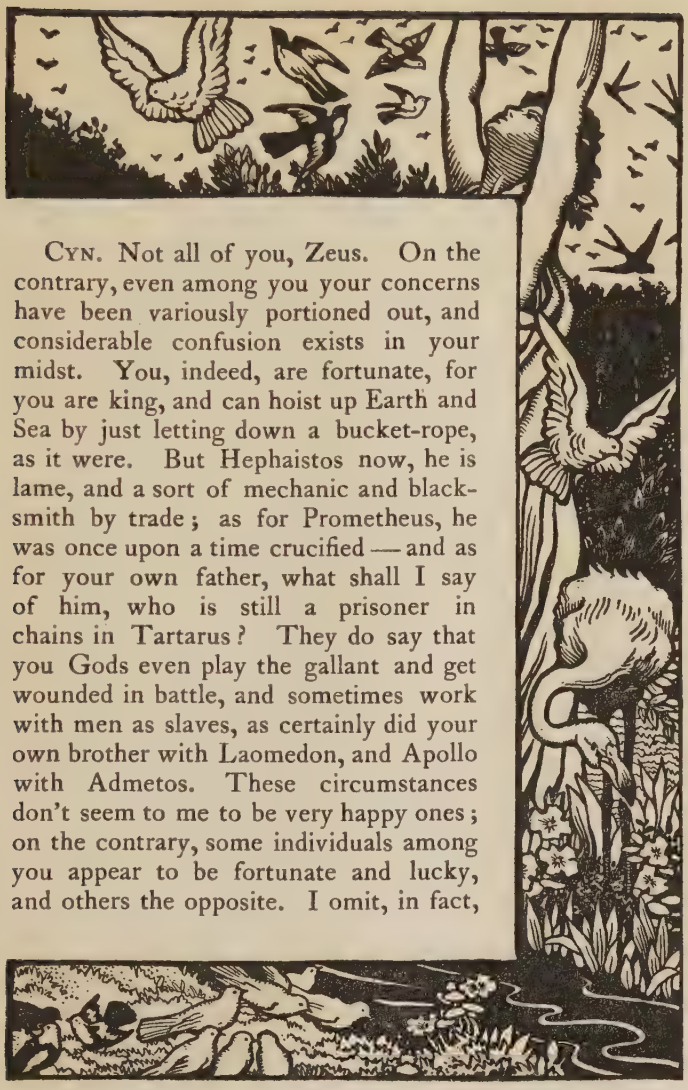
Cyn. [*triumphantly*]. That's sufficient — since even you allow that the



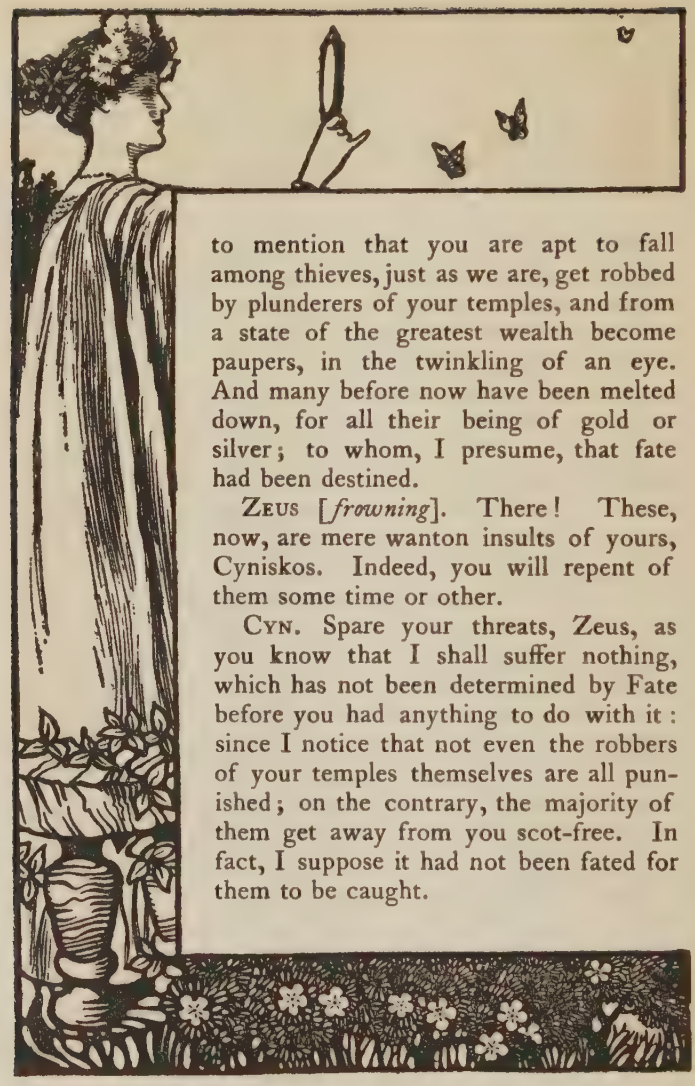


sacrifices are of no earthly use, but are offered simply by way of friendly feeling on the part of men, who honour the superior power. Yet if any one of those sophists you speak of were present, he would ask you why you affirm the Gods to be superior, and that, seeing they are fellow-slaves with men, and under subjection to the same mistresses — the Fates. For the plea of immortality will not avail them, so as, on that account, to gain the reputation of superiority: because that accident, in fact, makes it far worse for them, seeing that death would have removed them to a state of freedom; while, as it is, your business ends only with infinity, and your slavery, wound up with that long-reaching thread, is everlasting.

Zeus. But, Cyniskos, that eternity and that infinity of ours is a blessed one for us, and we live in the enjoyment of all good things.



Cyn. Not all of you, Zeus. On the contrary, even among you your concerns have been variously portioned out, and considerable confusion exists in your midst. You, indeed, are fortunate, for you are king, and can hoist up Earth and Sea by just letting down a bucket-rope, as it were. But Hephaistos now, he is lame, and a sort of mechanic and blacksmith by trade; as for Prometheus, he was once upon a time crucified — and as for your own father, what shall I say of him, who is still a prisoner in chains in Tartarus? They do say that you Gods even play the gallant and get wounded in battle, and sometimes work with men as slaves, as certainly did your own brother with Laomedon, and Apollo with Admetos. These circumstances don't seem to me to be very happy ones; on the contrary, some individuals among you appear to be fortunate and lucky, and others the opposite. I omit, in fact,



to mention that you are apt to fall among thieves, just as we are, get robbed by plunderers of your temples, and from a state of the greatest wealth become paupers, in the twinkling of an eye. And many before now have been melted down, for all their being of gold or silver; to whom, I presume, that fate had been destined.

Zeus [*frowning*]. There! These, now, are mere wanton insults of yours, Cyniskos. Indeed, you will repent of them some time or other.

Cyn. Spare your threats, Zeus, as you know that I shall suffer nothing, which has not been determined by Fate before you had anything to do with it: since I notice that not even the robbers of your temples themselves are all punished; on the contrary, the majority of them get away from you scot-free. In fact, I suppose it had not been fated for them to be caught.

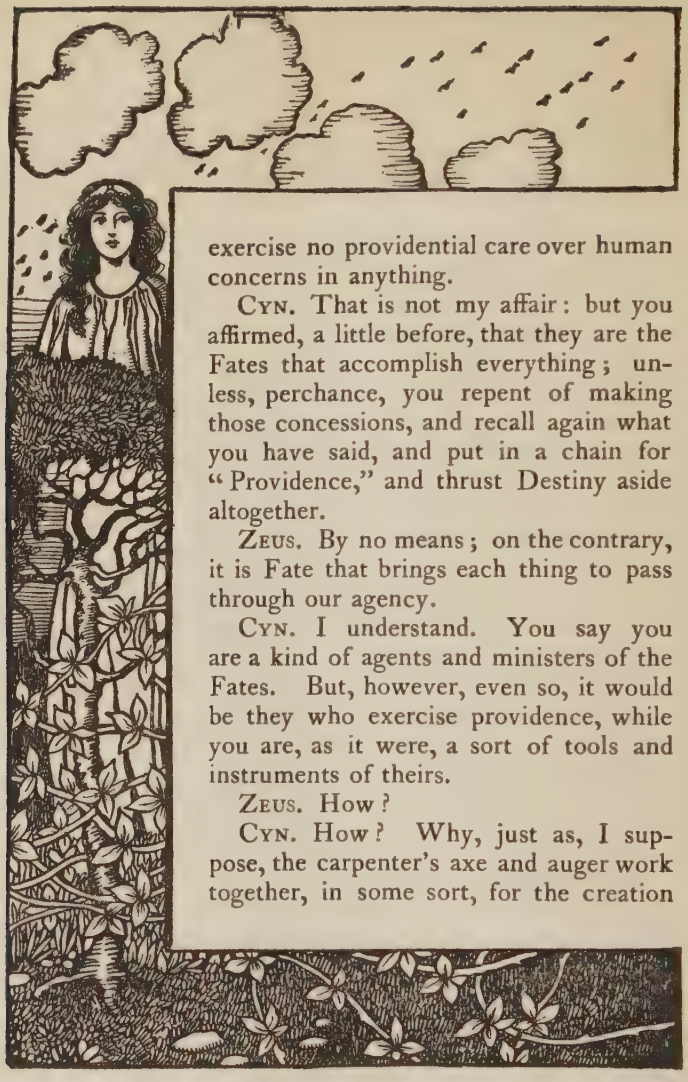


ZEUS. Did I not say that you are, without doubt, one of those fellows who are for doing away with providence by your style of argument?

CYN. You are terribly afraid of them, Zeus, I don't know why. Everything, in fact, I say, whatever it may be, you suspect to be their teaching. But I — from whom else should I learn the truth rather than from you? — I should be glad to ask you this, too, who is this "Providence" of yours; is it some Fate, or a divinity even above her, as it were, ruling over the Gods themselves?

ZEUS. I told you already before that it is not lawful or proper for you to know everything. And you, although at the beginning you said you would ask a certain single question, don't stop a moment, putting a number of hair-splitting subtleties to me; and I see it is the chief aim of your discourse, to prove we





exercise no providential care over human concerns in anything.

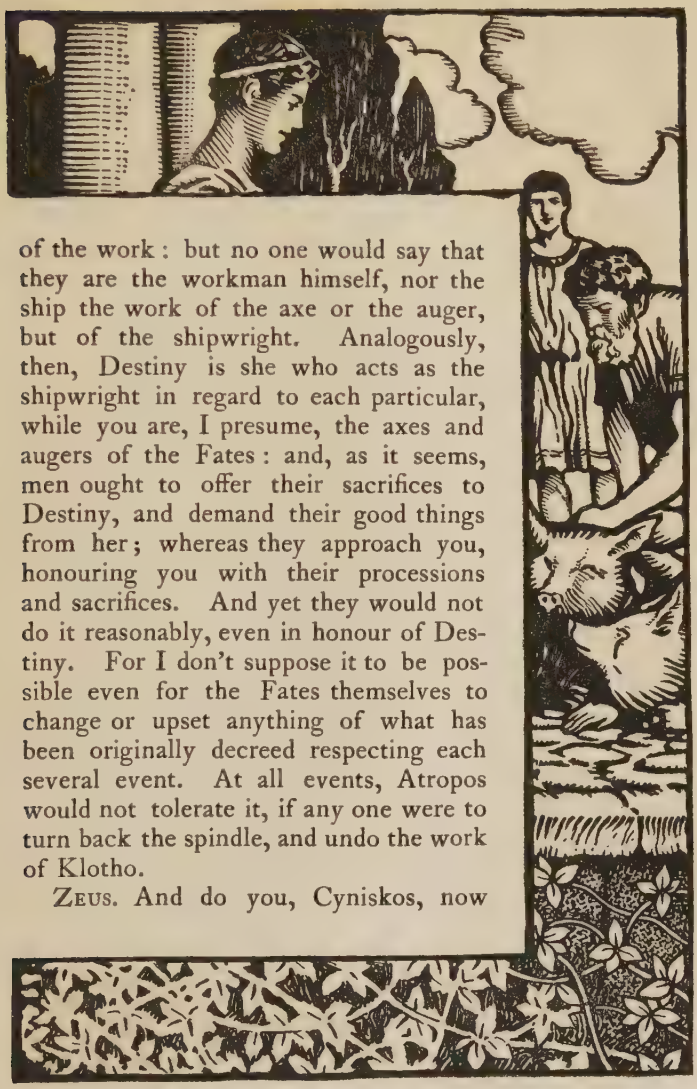
Cyn. That is not my affair: but you affirmed, a little before, that they are the Fates that accomplish everything; unless, perchance, you repent of making those concessions, and recall again what you have said, and put in a chain for "Providence," and thrust Destiny aside altogether.

Zeus. By no means; on the contrary, it is Fate that brings each thing to pass through our agency.

Cyn. I understand. You say you are a kind of agents and ministers of the Fates. But, however, even so, it would be they who exercise providence, while you are, as it were, a sort of tools and instruments of theirs.

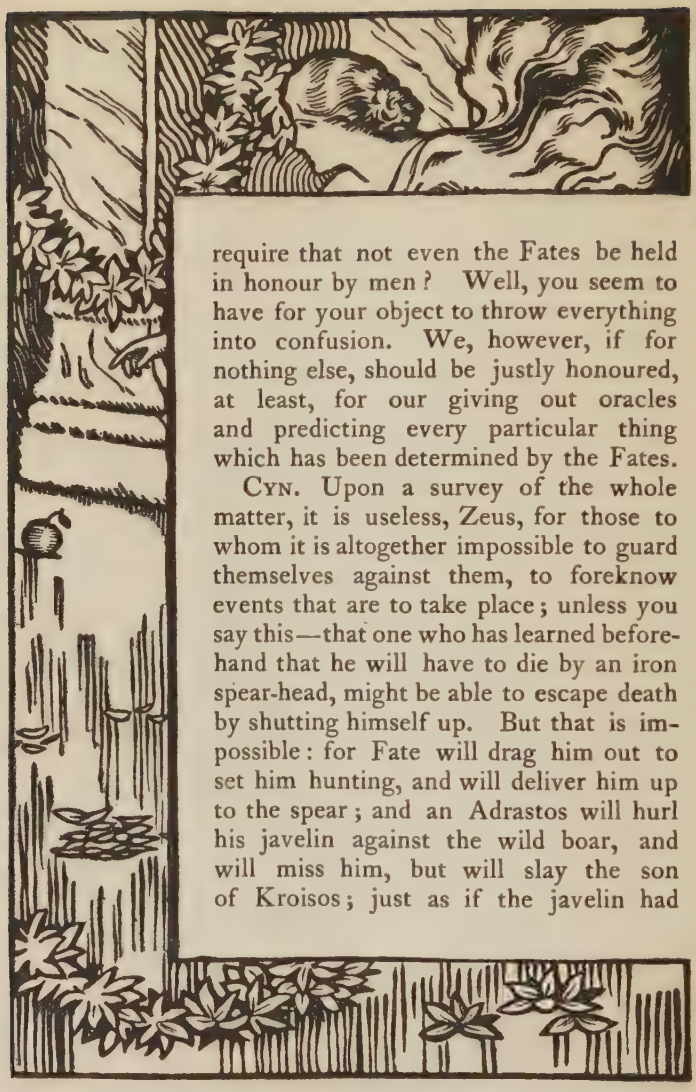
Zeus. How?

Cyn. How? Why, just as, I suppose, the carpenter's axe and auger work together, in some sort, for the creation



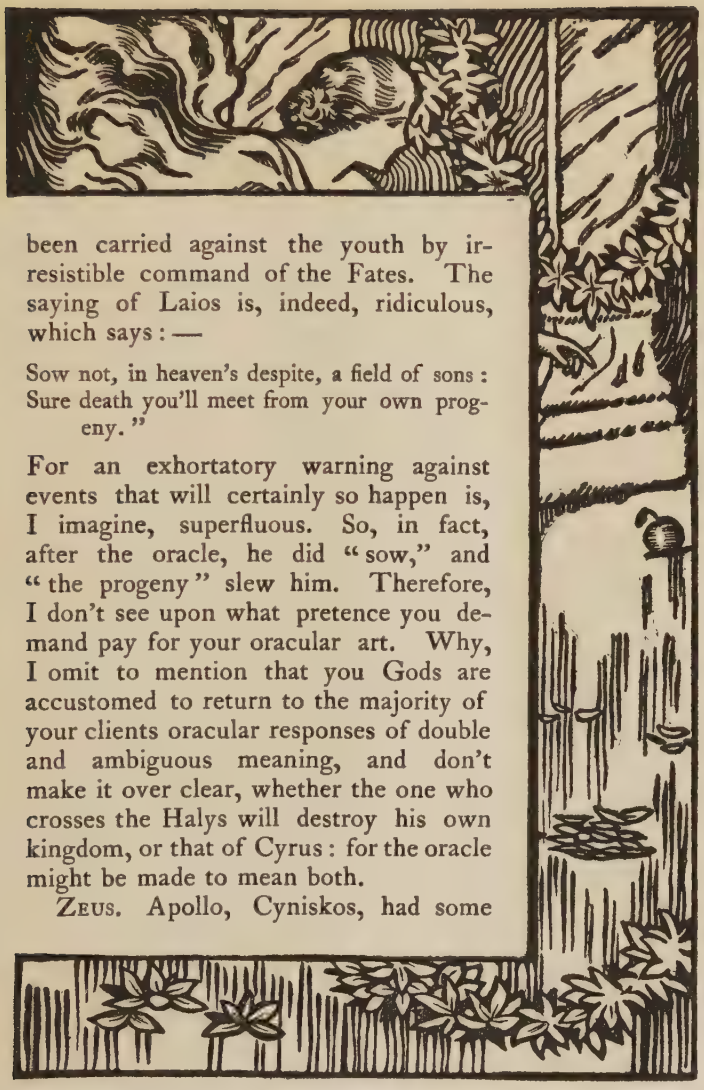
of the work: but no one would say that they are the workman himself, nor the ship the work of the axe or the auger, but of the shipwright. Analogously, then, Destiny is she who acts as the shipwright in regard to each particular, while you are, I presume, the axes and augers of the Fates: and, as it seems, men ought to offer their sacrifices to Destiny, and demand their good things from her; whereas they approach you, honouring you with their processions and sacrifices. And yet they would not do it reasonably, even in honour of Destiny. For I don't suppose it to be possible even for the Fates themselves to change or upset anything of what has been originally decreed respecting each several event. At all events, Atropos would not tolerate it, if any one were to turn back the spindle, and undo the work of Klotho.

ZEUS. And do you, Cyniskos, now



require that not even the Fates be held in honour by men? Well, you seem to have for your object to throw everything into confusion. We, however, if for nothing else, should be justly honoured, at least, for our giving out oracles and predicting every particular thing which has been determined by the Fates.

CYN. Upon a survey of the whole matter, it is useless, Zeus, for those to whom it is altogether impossible to guard themselves against them, to foreknow events that are to take place; unless you say this—that one who has learned beforehand that he will have to die by an iron spear-head, might be able to escape death by shutting himself up. But that is impossible: for Fate will drag him out to set him hunting, and will deliver him up to the spear; and an Adrastos will hurl his javelin against the wild boar, and will miss him, but will slay the son of Kroisos; just as if the javelin had



been carried against the youth by irresistible command of the Fates. The saying of Laios is, indeed, ridiculous, which says: —

Sow not, in heaven's despite, a field of sons:
Sure death you'll meet from your own progeny."

For an exhortatory warning against events that will certainly so happen is, I imagine, superfluous. So, in fact, after the oracle, he did "sow," and "the progeny" slew him. Therefore, I don't see upon what pretence you demand pay for your oracular art. Why, I omit to mention that you Gods are accustomed to return to the majority of your clients oracular responses of double and ambiguous meaning, and don't make it over clear, whether the one who crosses the Halys will destroy his own kingdom, or that of Cyrus: for the oracle might be made to mean both.

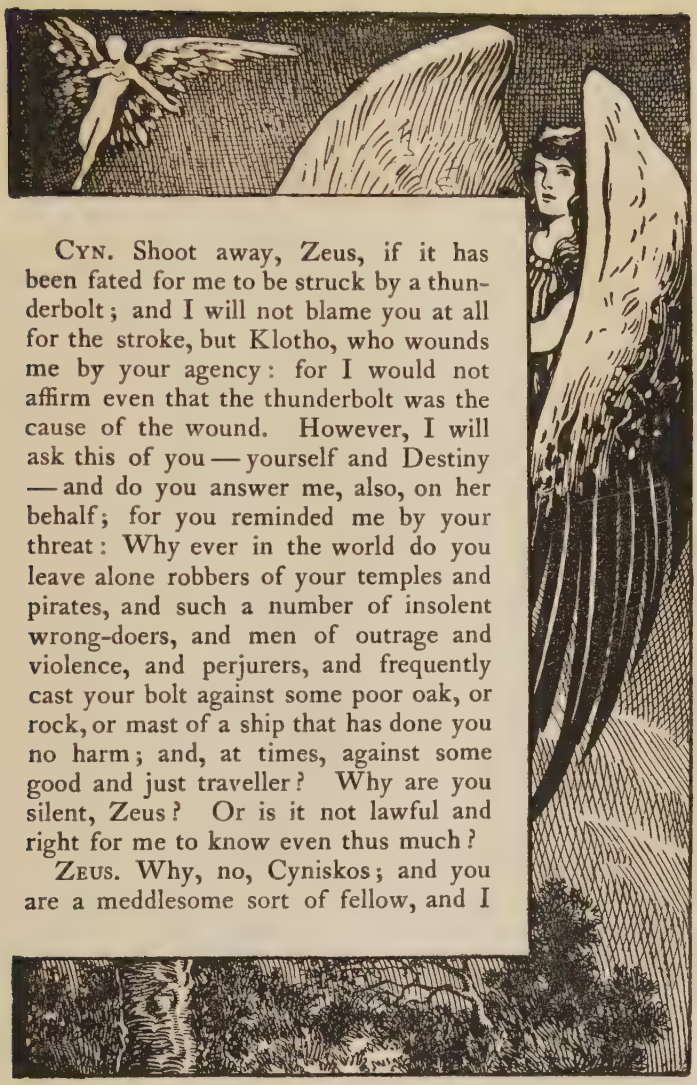
Zeus. Apollo, Cyniskos, had some



cause for anger against Kroisos, inasmuch as he tempted him by boiling lamb's flesh and a tortoise together.

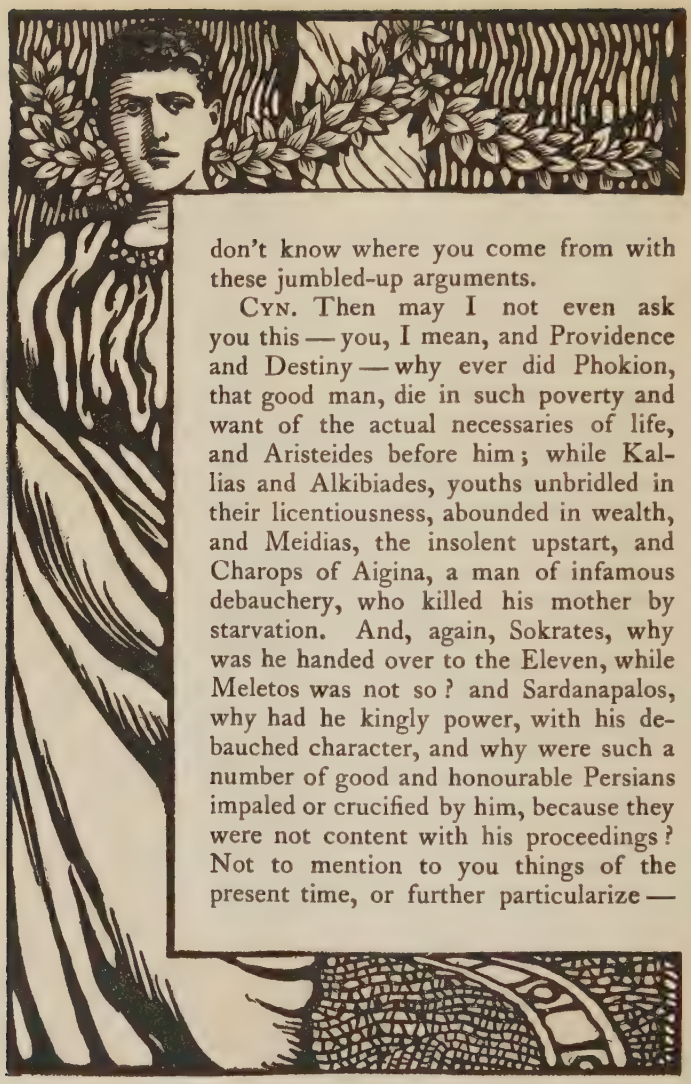
Cyn. As a God, he ought not even to have been angry: but, however, it had been fated, I presume, for the Lydian that he should be deceived by the oracle; and, besides, Destiny spun for him that he should not understand too clearly what was in store for him. So even your oracular art is her work.

Zeus. And do you leave nothing for us, but are we Gods without any purpose, and do we not import any sort of providence into human affairs, and are we, like a lot of axes and augers, in actual fact, unworthy of sacrifices? Indeed, I think you quite reasonably have a supreme contempt for me, because, as you see, I forbear my hand, although ready to hurl my thunderbolt at you, all the time you are making all these cavillings against us.



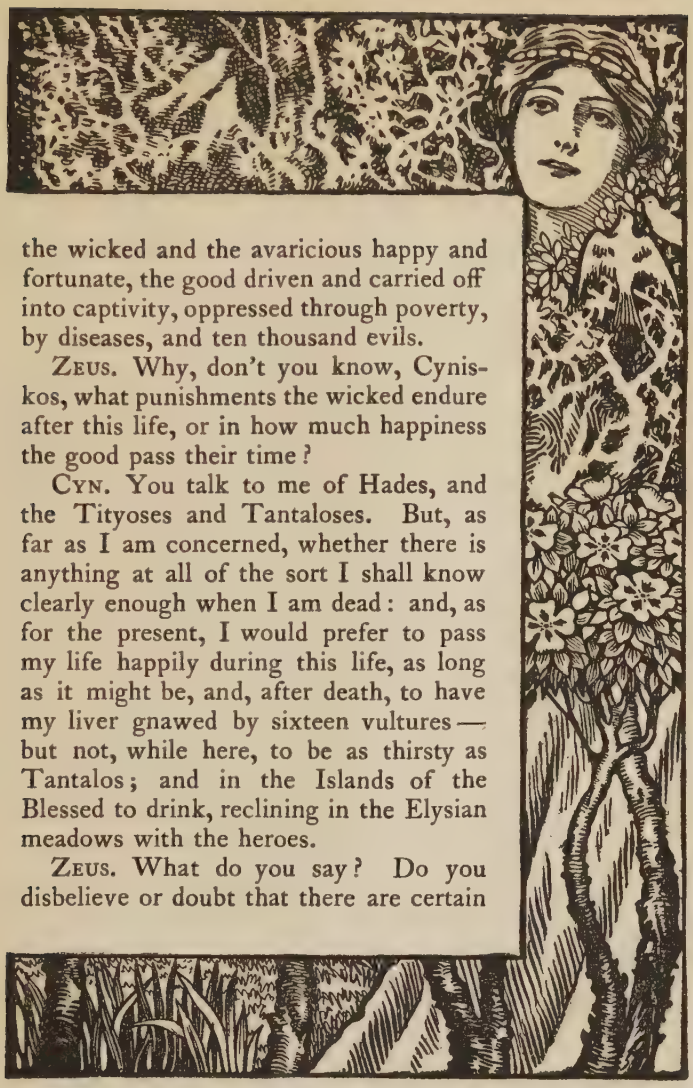
Cyn. Shoot away, Zeus, if it has been fated for me to be struck by a thunderbolt; and I will not blame you at all for the stroke, but Klotho, who wounds me by your agency: for I would not affirm even that the thunderbolt was the cause of the wound. However, I will ask this of you — yourself and Destiny — and do you answer me, also, on her behalf; for you reminded me by your threat: Why ever in the world do you leave alone robbers of your temples and pirates, and such a number of insolent wrong-doers, and men of outrage and violence, and perjurers, and frequently cast your bolt against some poor oak, or rock, or mast of a ship that has done you no harm; and, at times, against some good and just traveller? Why are you silent, Zeus? Or is it not lawful and right for me to know even thus much?

Zeus. Why, no, Cyniskos; and you are a meddlesome sort of fellow, and I



don't know where you come from with these jumbled-up arguments.

Cyn. Then may I not even ask you this — you, I mean, and Providence and Destiny — why ever did Phokion, that good man, die in such poverty and want of the actual necessaries of life, and Aristeides before him; while Kallias and Alkibiades, youths unbridled in their licentiousness, abounded in wealth, and Meidias, the insolent upstart, and Charops of Aigina, a man of infamous debauchery, who killed his mother by starvation. And, again, Sokrates, why was he handed over to the Eleven, while Meletos was not so? and Sardanapalos, why had he kingly power, with his debauched character, and why were such a number of good and honourable Persians impaled or crucified by him, because they were not content with his proceedings? Not to mention to you things of the present time, or further particularize —

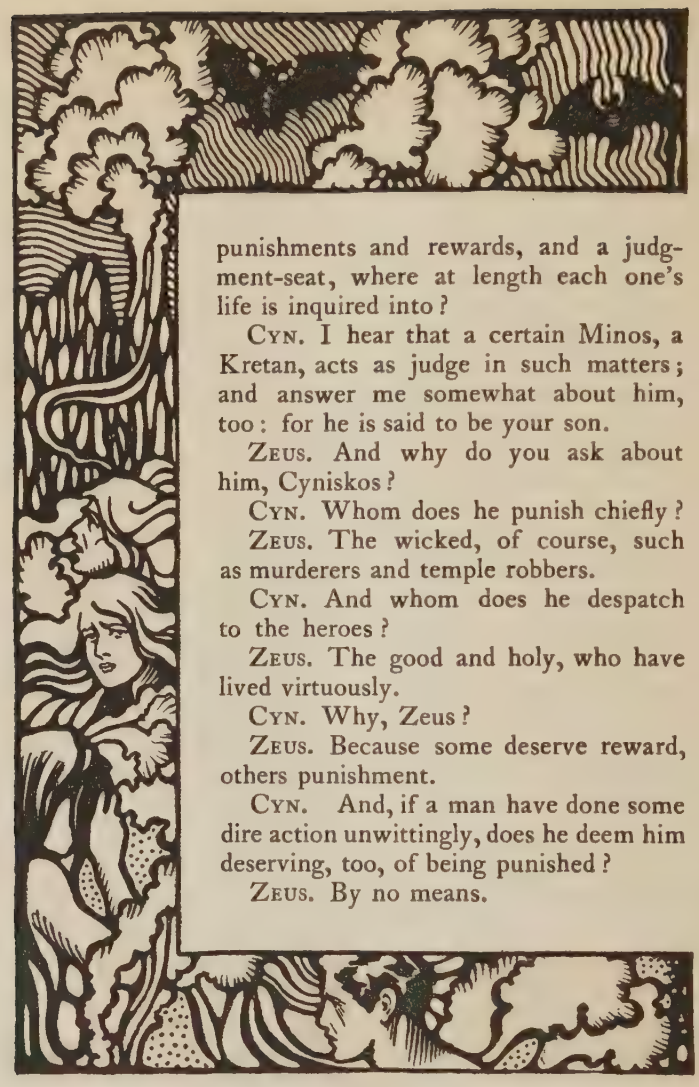


the wicked and the avaricious happy and fortunate, the good driven and carried off into captivity, oppressed through poverty, by diseases, and ten thousand evils.

ZEUS. Why, don't you know, Cyniskos, what punishments the wicked endure after this life, or in how much happiness the good pass their time?

CYN. You talk to me of Hades, and the Tityoses and Tantaloses. But, as far as I am concerned, whether there is anything at all of the sort I shall know clearly enough when I am dead: and, as for the present, I would prefer to pass my life happily during this life, as long as it might be, and, after death, to have my liver gnawed by sixteen vultures — but not, while here, to be as thirsty as Tantalos; and in the Islands of the Blessed to drink, reclining in the Elysian meadows with the heroes.

ZEUS. What do you say? Do you disbelieve or doubt that there are certain



punishments and rewards, and a judgment-seat, where at length each one's life is inquired into?

CYN. I hear that a certain Minos, a Kretan, acts as judge in such matters; and answer me somewhat about him, too: for he is said to be your son.

ZEUS. And why do you ask about him, Cyniskos?

CYN. Whom does he punish chiefly?

ZEUS. The wicked, of course, such as murderers and temple robbers.

CYN. And whom does he despatch to the heroes?

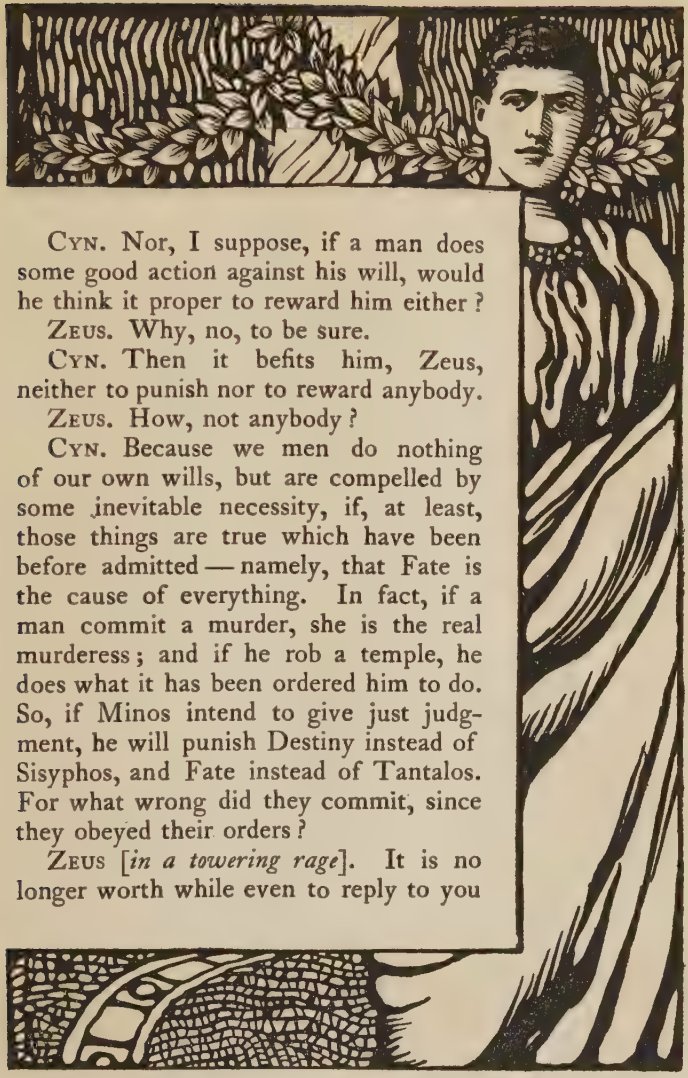
ZEUS. The good and holy, who have lived virtuously.

CYN. Why, Zeus?

ZEUS. Because some deserve reward, others punishment.

CYN. And, if a man have done some dire action unwittingly, does he deem him deserving, too, of being punished?

ZEUS. By no means.



CYN. Nor, I suppose, if a man does some good action against his will, would he think it proper to reward him either?

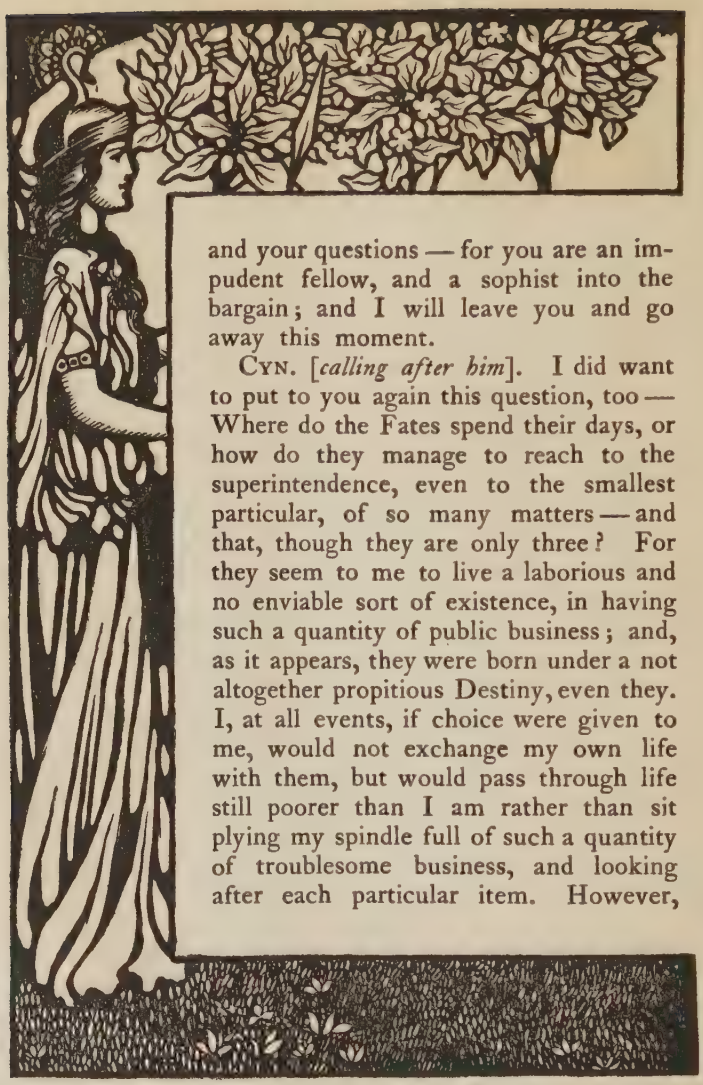
ZEUS. Why, no, to be sure.

CYN. Then it befits him, Zeus, neither to punish nor to reward anybody.

ZEUS. How, not anybody?

CYN. Because we men do nothing of our own wills, but are compelled by some inevitable necessity, if, at least, those things are true which have been before admitted — namely, that Fate is the cause of everything. In fact, if a man commit a murder, she is the real murderess; and if he rob a temple, he does what it has been ordered him to do. So, if Minos intend to give just judgment, he will punish Destiny instead of Sisyphos, and Fate instead of Tantalos. For what wrong did they commit, since they obeyed their orders?

ZEUS [*in a towering rage*]. It is no longer worth while even to reply to you

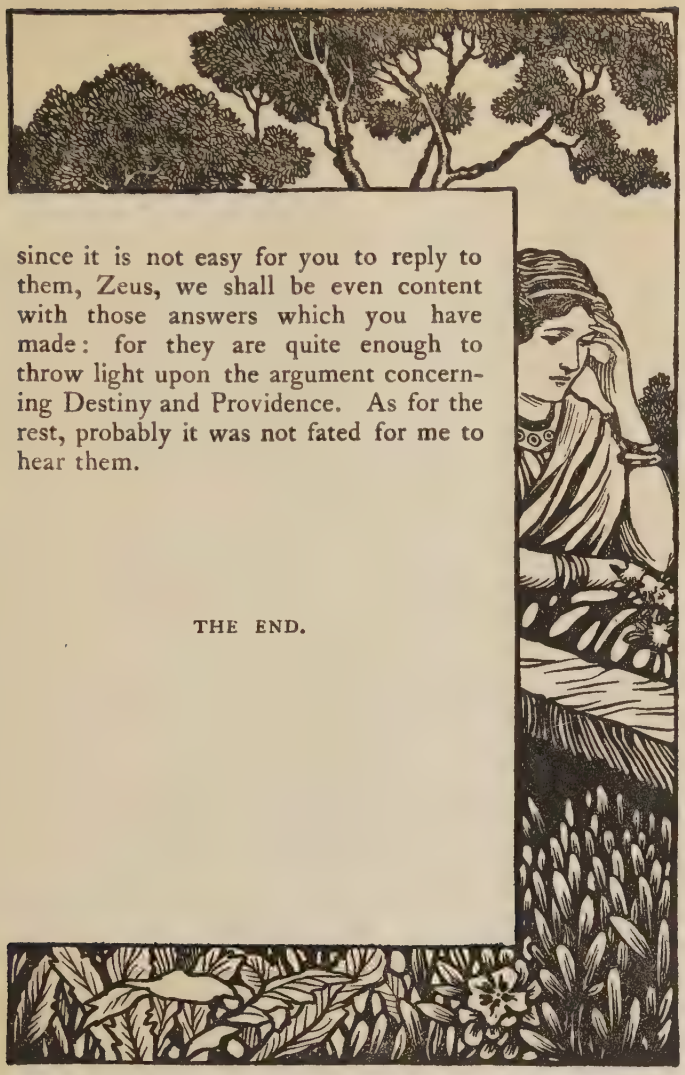


and your questions — for you are an impudent fellow, and a sophist into the bargain; and I will leave you and go away this moment.

Cyn. [*calling after him*]. I did want to put to you again this question, too — Where do the Fates spend their days, or how do they manage to reach to the superintendence, even to the smallest particular, of so many matters — and that, though they are only three? For they seem to me to live a laborious and no enviable sort of existence, in having such a quantity of public business; and, as it appears, they were born under a not altogether propitious Destiny, even they. I, at all events, if choice were given to me, would not exchange my own life with them, but would pass through life still poorer than I am rather than sit plying my spindle full of such a quantity of troublesome business, and looking after each particular item. However,

since it is not easy for you to reply to them, Zeus, we shall be even content with those answers which you have made: for they are quite enough to throw light upon the argument concerning Destiny and Providence. As for the rest, probably it was not fated for me to hear them.

THE END.



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